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BOB CRATCHIT AND TINY TIM.

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Engraved expressly for JAS. R. OSGOOD, & Co.'s Diamond Dickens.

DIALOGUES FROM DICKENS.

SECOND SERIES.

DIALOGUES AND DRAMAS.

ARRANGED BY

W. ELIOT FETTE, A.M.



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PREFACE.

IN arranging my first volume of Dialogues, it was my aim to make each scene entirely independent of every other, as I thought that so they would be best adapted to school purposes; at the same time, by bringing closely together those scenes which were taken from the same novel, I intended to show that there was a certain connection between them, and to suggest the idea of grouping them in the form of dramas for evening entertainments. Finding that the possibility of such a use of the dialogues had been generally overlooked, I took occasion, in the preface to the third edition of the book, to call attention to it, and to give an outline of several little plays which I had myself formed in that way, and which had been performed with success.

In this volume I have pursued a different course, and instead of a collection of dialogues which might be grouped into dramas, I have arranged a number of dramas which may be, if desired, separated into dialogues, nearly every scene containing enough of interest in itself to render it acceptable as a part of a school exhibition.

If it may be assumed that by most persons that will be

deemed the best dramatization of an author's works in which, without loss of unity, the language of the original has been most faithfully preserved, I may claim that the following "Dramas from Dickens" are superior to those hitherto presented under that name, for they are given here just as Mr. Dickens wrote them, without alteration or interpolation; and when it is added that Mr. Dickens himself took part in the performance of plays from these same stories, no further proof would seem to be required of their being worthy the ambition of the most talented performers, and the attention of the best audience.

In every scene careful directions are given as to entrances, exits, and positions on the stage, and much of what is technically called "stage business" is indicated; whilst at the end of the book will be found a complete Index to Characters, with a description of the personal appearance and costume of each person.

W. E. F.

OCTOBER 2, 1871.

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STAGE DIRECTIONS.

(The reader is supposed to face the audience.)

C. CENTRE.

L. LEFT.

L. C. LEFT CENTRE.

L. U. E. LEFT UPPER
ENTRANCE.

C. D. CENTRE DOOR.

R. RIGHT.

R. C. RIGHT CENTRE.

R. U. E. RIGHT UPPER
ENTRANCE.

MERRY CHRISTMAS.

DIALOGUES FROM DICKENS.

SECOND SERIES.

MERRY CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

SCENE: Office of EBENEZER SCROOGE, the Miser. —
SCROOGE at his desk. His clerk, BOB CRATCHIT, in a small adjoining room.

Enter FRED.

Fred. A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

Scrooge. Bah! Humbug!

Fred. Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean that, I am sure.

Scrooge. I do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

Fred. (*Gayly.*) Come, then, what right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

Scrooge. Bah! Humbug!

Fred. Don't be cross, uncle.

Scrooge. What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you, but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books, and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should.

Fred. Uncle!

Scrooge. Nephew, keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

Fred. Keep it! But you don't keep it.

Scrooge. Let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you! Much good it has *ever* done you!

Fred. There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say, Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, — apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that, — as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem, by one consent, to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And, therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap

of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it! (BOB CRATCHIT *applauds*.)

Scrooge. (*Turning towards BOB'S room.*) Let me hear another sound from *you* and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation. (*To FRED.*) You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

Fred. Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow.

Scrooge. I'll see you hanged first.

Fred. But why? Why?

Scrooge. Why did you get married?

Fred. Because I fell in love.

Scrooge. (*Growling.*) Because you fell in love! Good afternoon!

Fred. Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?

Scrooge. Good afternoon!

Fred. I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you. Why cannot we be friends?

Scrooge. Good afternoon!

Fred. I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So a Merry Christmas, uncle!

Scrooge. Good afternoon!

Fred. And a Happy New Year! (*Passes out through the clerk's office.*) A Merry Christmas, Mr. Cratchit!

Bob. A Merry Christmas to *you*, sir!

Scrooge. There's another fellow, my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a Merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam.

Enter a GENTLEMAN, hat in hand.

Visitor. (*Looking at his list.*) Scrooge and Marley, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?

Scrooge. Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago this very night.

Visitor. (*Handing his papers to S.*) We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner. (*SCROOGE frowns, shakes his head, and hands back the papers.*) At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge (*taking up a pen*), it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessaries; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

Scrooge. Are there no prisons?

Visitor. (*Laying down the pen.*) Plenty of prisons.

Scrooge. And the union work-houses, are they still in operation?

Visitor. They are. Still, I wish I could say they were not.

Scrooge. The tread-mill and the Poor Law are in full vigor, then?

Visitor. Both very busy, sir.

Scrooge. O, I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course. I am very glad to hear it.

Visitor. Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?

Scrooge. Nothing.

Visitor. You wish to be anonymous?

Scrooge. I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, sir, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned—they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.

Visitor. Many can't go there; and many would rather die.

Scrooge. If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides,—excuse me,—I don't know that.

Visitor. But you *might* know it.

Scrooge. It's not my business. It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, sir! (*Exit GENTLEMAN.*) Six o'clock, Cratchit; time to shut up. (*CRATCHIT snuffs candle, puts on his hat, and appears at his door.*) You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose.

Cratchit. If quite convenient, sir.

Scrooge. It's not convenient, and it's not fair. If I was to stop half a crown for it, you'd think yourself ill used, I'll be bound. (*C. smiles.*) And yet you

don't think *me* ill used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.

Crat. It's only once a year, sir.

Scrooge. A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! (*Buttons his coat to the chin.*) But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.

Crat. I will, sir. (*SCROOGE goes out, grumbling.*)

[*Curtain.*

NOTE.—For the presentation of the “visions,” which form a part of the three following Scenes, the stage must be divided by a “flat” running from side to side, and separating Scrooge's room, which is in front, from the space behind, in which the pictures are to be placed. In the centre of this flat (which must be painted with some light color, to represent the wall of Scrooge's room) is an arch, occupying about two thirds of the width of the stage. The arch is covered by a curtain (of the same color as the flat), made to roll up. Greater depth can be given to the pictures by stretching a gauze across the arch behind the curtain. If the stage is not deep enough to allow of this arrangement, Scrooge and the Ghost must go off, and the drop-curtain must fall in each scene before the visions appear. They will then station themselves one on each side of the stage, before “ringing up;” the curtain will rise, and the visions will appear on the full stage. In this case the furniture of Scrooge's room must be removed, and slight changes made in the text, so that Scrooge may leave his chamber with each of the Spirits. The whole may be made more effective by introducing soft music, appropriate to each scene, as the curtain rises and falls upon each vision.

MARLEY'S GHOST.

SCENE: SCROOGE'S Chamber, shabbily furnished. R. a door; L. a fireplace; tin sauce-pan on the hob; R. a bed, with curtains (or, simply, curtains, so hung as to seem to conceal a bed); on the left, SCROOGE, in dressing-gown, slippers, and night-cap, and without his cravat, dozes in an arm-chair. Suddenly bells are heard on every side; SCROOGE wakes with a start; bells cease ringing; begin again furiously, then stop altogether. The clanking of a heavy chain succeeds; a heavy tread without; door opens R., and GHOST OF MARLEY enters. (See Index.) It advances, and stops a few paces from SCROOGE, who stares at it in terror.

Scrooge. How now; what do you want with me?

Ghost. Much!

Scrooge. Who are you?

Ghost. Ask me who I was.

Scrooge. (*Louder.*) Who were you, then? You're particular for a shade.

Ghost. In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

Scrooge. (*Doubtfully.*) Can you — can you — sit down?

Ghost. I can.

Scrooge. Do it then. (*G. sits on a stool facing S.*)

Ghost. You don't believe in me.

Scrooge. I don't.

Ghost. What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your own senses?

Scrooge. I don't know.

Ghost. Why do you doubt your senses.

Scrooge. Because a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are! You see this toothpick?

Ghost. (*Looking steadily at SCROOGE.*) I do.

Scrooge. You are not looking at it.

Ghost. But I see it, notwithstanding.

Scrooge. Well! I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you; Humbug! (*GHOST cries out, and shakes its chain. SCROOGE falls upon his knees, and clasps his hands.*) Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?

Ghost. Man of the worldly mind, do you believe in me or not?

Scrooge. I do! I must! But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?

Ghost. It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world,—O, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness! (*Cries out, shakes its chain again, and wrings its hands.*)

Scrooge. (*Trembling.*) You are fettered. Tell me why?

Ghost. I wear the chain I forged in life. I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you? Or would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas eves ago. You have labored on it since. It is a ponderous chain! (*S. glances about him on the floor.*)

Scrooge. (*Imploringly.*) Jacob! Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!

Ghost. I have none to give. It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more, is all permitted to me. I cannot rest; I cannot stay; I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house. Mark me! — in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me. (*S. still on his knees, puts his hands in his pockets and ponders.*)

Scrooge. You must have been very slow about it, Jacob.

Ghost. Slow!

Scrooge. (*Musingly.*) Seven years dead, and travelling all the time?

Ghost. The whole time. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.

Scrooge. You travel fast?

Ghost. On the wings of the wind.

Scrooge. You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years.

Ghost. (*Clanking its chain, and uttering another cry.*) O, captive bound, and double-ironed, not to

know that ages of incessant labor by immortal creatures for this earth, must pass into eternity, before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit, working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused! Yet such was I! O! such was I!

Scrooge. But you were always a good man of business, Jacob.

Ghost. (*Wringing its hands.*) Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business. (*Raises his chain, and throws it down again.*) At this time of the rolling year, I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted *me*? (*S. trembles.*) Hear me! My time is nearly gone.

Scrooge. I will. But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery, Jacob, pray!

Ghost. How it is that I appear before you, in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day. (*S. shudders.*) That is no light part of my penance. I am here to-night to warn you that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

Scrooge. You were always a good friend to me. Thank'ee!

Ghost. You will be haunted by three spirits.

Scrooge. (*Falteringly.*) Is that — the chance — and hope — you mentioned, Jacob?

Ghost. It is.

Scrooge. I, — I think I'd rather not.

Ghost. Without their visits, you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One.

Scrooge. Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?

Ghost. Expect the second on the next night at the same hour; the third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us.

[*G. winds the chain round his arm, rises and walks slowly backward towards the door.*

Music. *S. rises from his knees and follows. When G. reaches the door, it raises its hand. S. stops, with hands clasped, and raised supplicatingly; G. vanishes, and S. falls heavily on the floor. Curtain.*

“CHRISTMAS PAST.”

SCENE, the same. *Time, night; SCROOGE again asleep before the fire. A bell strikes One; the room is suddenly filled with light, and the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST (See Index) stands behind SCROOGE, who wakes with a start.*

Scrooge. Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?

Ghost. I am.

Scrooge. Who and what are you?

Ghost. I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Scrooge. Long Past?

Ghost. No. Your Past.

Scrooge. May I ask what business brings you here?

Ghost. Your welfare.

Scrooge. Thank you; but a night of unbroken rest would be more conducive to that end.

Ghost. Your reclamation, then. Take heed! Rise, now, and see what I would show you. (*They turn towards the back; — Music; — the curtain rises slowly, and shows VISION I.: a room, in which is a boy seated at a desk. He has before him a book containing large illustrations. As he turns the leaves, SCROOGE leans eagerly forward, and looks at the pictures. The Spirit watches SCROOGE.*)

Scrooge. (*Excitedly.*) Why, it's Ali Baba! it's dear, old, honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know. One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he *did* come, for the first time, just like

that. Poor boy! and Valentine, and his wild brother, Orson; there they go! And what's his name, who was put down in his drawers, asleep, at the gate of Damascus; don't you see him? And the Sultan's groom turned upside down by the Genii; there he is upon his head! Served him right! I'm glad of it! What business had *he* to be married to the princess! (*More excitedly, half laughing, half crying.*) There's the parrot! Green body and yellow tail,—there he is! 'Poor Robin Crusoe,' he called him when he came home again, after sailing round the island. Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you been, Robin Crusoe? The man thought he was dreaming, but he wasn't. It was the parrot, you know. There goes Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloo! Whoop! Halloo! (*Dropping his voice.*) Poor boy! (*Curtain falls slowly.*) I wish — (*puts his hand in his pocket*) — but it's too late now.

Ghost. (L.) What is the matter?

Scrooge. (R.) Nothing—nothing! There was a boy singing a Christmas carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something, that's all.

Ghost. (*Smiling and waving its hand.*) Let us see another Christmas.

[*Music. Curtain rises on VISION II. The same room. The boy pacing the floor impatiently; a door opens, R., and a little girl enters, runs to him, and embraces him.*

Fanny. (R. C.) Dear, dear, brother! I have come to bring you home; to bring you home, home, home! (*Claps her hands.*)

Eben. (L. C.) Home, little Fan?

Fanny. Yes, home for good and all; home forever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home is like heaven. He spoke so gently to me one night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him if you might come home, and he said, Yes, you should, and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man! And are never to come back here; but first, we are to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world.

Eben. You're quite a woman, little Fan! (*She claps her hands and laughs, tries to touch his head, and stands on tiptoe to embrace him. She then leads him out. Curtain.*)

Ghost. Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered; but she had a large heart.

Scrooge. So she had; you're right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!

Ghost. She died a woman, and had, as I think, children.

Scrooge. One child.

Ghost. True, your nephew.

Scrooge. Yes.

Ghost. (*Pointing.*) Look! (*Curtain rises on VISION III. A young lady, in mourning, seated c. ; a young man stands near her.*)

Belle. It matters little, Eben, to you, very little. Another idol has displaced me, and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.

Eben. What idol has displaced you?

Belle. A golden one.

Eben. This is the even-handed dealing of the world! There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth.

Belle. You fear the world too much. All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off, one by one, until the master passion, Gain, engrosses you — have I not?

Eben. What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser — what then? I am not changed towards you. (*She shakes her head.*) Am I?

Belle. Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor, and content to be so, until in good season we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You *are* changed. When it was made, you were another man.

Eben. I was a boy.

Belle. Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. *I* am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you.

Eben. Have I ever sought release?

Belle. In words, no — never!

Eben. In what, then?

Belle. In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been

between us, tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!

Eben. You think not.

Belle. I would gladly think otherwise if I could, Heaven knows! When *I* have learned a truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. If you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even *I* believe you would choose a dowerless girl? You who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain; or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do, and I release you, with a full heart, for the love of him you once were. May you be happy in the life that you have chosen. (*She turns away. Curtain.*)

Scrooge. Spirit, show me no more! Why do you delight to torment me?

Ghost. One shadow more.

Scrooge. No more! I wish to see no more! I cannot bear it. (*Falls into a chair, R. C., with his arms on the back, and his head resting on his arms.*)

Ghost. I told you that these were shadows of the things that have been. That they are what they are, do not blame me.

Scrooge. (*Waving his hand*) Leave me! Leave me! haunt me no longer. (*Spirit vanishes, L. Curtain.*)

"CHRISTMAS PRESENT."

SCENE: the same. SCROOGE, *as before, in his chair R., but not sleeping. Bell strikes one. Enter, L., GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. (See Index.) SCROOGE hangs his head.*

Ghost. (c.) I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me. (SCROOGE *looks up.*) You have never seen the like of me before!

Scrooge. Never.

Ghost. Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers, born in these later years?

Scrooge. I don't think I have. I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?

Ghost. More than eighteen hundred.

Scrooge. (*Aside.*) A tremendous family to provide for. Spirit, show me what you will. Last night I learned a lesson, which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.

Ghost. (*Pointing.*) Look! (*They retire to opposite sides of the stage. Curtain rises on VISION IV. BOB CRATCHIT'S kitchen. MRS. C., with the assistance of two or more children, laying the table.*)

Mrs. C. What has ever got your precious father then? and your brother, Tiny Tim? and Martha wasn't as late last Christmas Day, by half an hour.

Martha. (*Appearing at the door, c.*) Here's Martha, mother!

Children. Here's Martha, mother. Hurra! There's such a goose, Martha!

Mrs. C. Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are! (*Kisses her, and takes off her bonnet and shawl.*)

Mar. We'd a deal of work to finish up last night, and had to clear away this morning, mother.

Mrs. C. Well! never mind, so long as you are come. Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!

Chil. No, no, there's father coming. Hide, Martha, hide! (*She hides, L. Enter BOB CRATCHIT, C. TINY TIM, holding a crutch, sits on his shoulder.*)

Bob. (*Looking about.*) Why, where's our Martha?

Mrs. C. Not coming.

Bob. (*Putting TIM down.*) Not coming! Not coming, upon Christmas Day? (*MARTHA comes out and embraces her father.*)

Mrs. C. And how did little Tim behave?

Bob. As good as gold, and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember, upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see; but he is growing strong and hearty now — is little Tim.

[*BOB mixes a jug of punch. The goose is brought in, R. They place themselves at table. TINY TIM next to his father. BOB begins to carve the goose. The children strike the table with the handles of their knives, and cry "Hurra!"*]

Remarks are made on the size, tenderness, flavor, cheapness, &c., of the goose. At last the punch is brought on and the glasses are filled.

Bob. A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears! God bless us!

All. Merry Christmas to all—

Tim. God bless us, every one! (*BOB takes his hand affectionately.*)

Scrooge. (R.) Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

Ghost. (L.) I see a vacant seat in the poor chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.

Scrooge. No, no! O, no, kind Spirit! Say he will be spared.

Ghost. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. (*SCROOGE hangs his head.*) Man,—if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered what the surplus is, and where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die?

Bob. (*Filling his glass.*) Mr. Scrooge! I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the founder of the feast!

Mrs. C. The founder of the feast, indeed! I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it.

Bob. My dear,—the children! Christmas Day!

Mrs. C. It *should* be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow!

Bob. My dear, — Christmas Day!

Mr. C. I'll drink his health for your sake, and the Day's, not for his. Long life to him! A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! He'll be very merry and very happy, I've no doubt. (*They drink. Curtain falls slowly. Music, to allow time to prepare the next scene. When all is ready, hearty laughter is heard without, and the curtain rises on* VISION V. *Room in house of SCROOGE'S nephew, FRED. Present, FRED and his wife; his sister, and MR. TOPPER, with other friends. They are seated about a table, on which are a decanter and glasses, and playing the game, "What is my Thought Like?"*)

Fred. (R.) I am thinking of an animal.

[*Here the company ask him questions in rapid succession, to each of which FRED replies, simply, Yes or No. For instance: A live animal? Ans. Yes. A disagreeable animal? Ans. Yes. A savage one? Yes. Does he growl? grunt? talk? live in — ? walk about the streets? Ans. to each, Yes. Ever made a show of? Ans. No. Ever led by anybody? No. Ever killed in a market? No. Is it a cow, a tiger, a bear, a cat, &c.? No, no, no, &c. Uproarious laughter throughout.*

Sister. (R. C.) I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!

Fred. What is it?

Sister. It's your uncle Scro-o-o-oge!

Fred. Yes, it is. And what do you think he said to me yesterday? Ha, ha! Ha-ha-ha-ha! Said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live! (*Heartily laughing.*) He believed it, too!

Wife. (L.) More shame for him, Fred.

Fred. He's a comical old fellow, that's the truth. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.

Wife. I'm sure he's very rich, Fred. At least you always tell *me* so.

Fred. What of that, my dear? His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking — ha, ha, ha — that he's ever going to benefit *us* with it.

Wife. I have no patience with him.

Fred. O, I have. I'm sorry for him. I couldn't be angry with him, if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence? He don't lose much of a dinner.

Wife. Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner.

Fred. Well, I'm very glad to hear it, because I haven't any great faith in these young housekeepers. What do *you* say, Topper?

Topper. (L. C.) (*Laughing.*) A bachelor, Fred,

is a wretched outcast, who has no right to express an opinion on such a subject.

Wife. Do go on, Fred. He never finishes what he begins to say. He is such a ridiculous fellow! (*Laughter.*)

Fred. I was only going to say that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it — I defy him — if he finds me going there in good temper, year after year, and saying, "Uncle Scrooge, how are you?" If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, that's something; and I think I shook him yesterday. (*Laughter. He passes the bottle.*) He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure, and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine, ready to our hand at the moment. I say, "Uncle Scrooge!"

All. Well! Uncle Scrooge! (*They drink.*)

Fred. A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is! He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!

[SCROOGE *leans eagerly forward, as if to speak to FRED, when the FRONT curtain falls.*

"CHRISTMAS YET TO COME."

SCENE, as before.

Enter, L., GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME.
 (See Index.) SCROOGE *sinks on his knees, as the Spirit approaches him.*

Scrooge. (R.) I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come? (GHOST *bows.*) You are about to show me the shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us, — Is that so, Spirit? (GHOST *bows.* SCROOGE *rises, R.*) Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But I know your purpose is to do me good, and I hope to live to be another man from what I was. Will you not speak to me?

[GHOST, L., *points to back of stage, where the curtain is rising on VISION VI.*

Enter, R. and L., two gentlemen.

Mr. A. How are you?

Mr. B. How are you? (*They shake hands.*)

Mr. A. Well, Old Scratch has got his own at last, eh?

Mr. B. So I'm told. What was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die.

Mr. A. I don't know much about it. I only know he's dead.

Mr. B. When did he die?

Mr. A. Last night, I believe.

Mr. B. What has he done with his money?

Mr. A. (*Yawning.*) I haven't heard. Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me, that's all I know. (*Both laugh.*) It's likely to be a very cheap funeral, for, upon my life, I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?

Mr. B. I don't mind going if a lunch is provided; but I must be fed if I make one. (*Laugh.*)

Mr. A. Well, I am more disinterested than that, for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Cold, isn't it! Seasonable for Christmas time. You are not a skater, I suppose?

Mr. B. No, no. Something else to think of. Good morning! [*Exeunt.*]

Front curtain. Music.

VISION VII. *A pawnbroker's shop; R., a gray-haired man behind a tattered curtain. Oil lamp on the counter before him.*

Enter, L., two women with bundles, which they throw on the floor. They stand and stare at each other, and at JOE, and all three burst into a laugh.

Mrs. C. Let the charwoman alone to be the first! Let the laundress alone to be the second! Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we two haven't met here without meaning it!

Joe. You couldn't have met in a better place — stop till I shut the door. (*Comes out.*) Ah, how it skreeks!

There ain't such a rusty bit of metal in the place as it's own hinges, I believe; and I'm sure there's no such old bones here as mine. Ha, ha! We're all suitable to our calling; we're well matched. (*The women sit down and stare at each other.*)

Mrs. C. (L. c.) What odds, then! What odds, Mrs. Dilber? Every person has a right to take care of themselves. *He* always did.

Mrs. D. (R. c.) That's true, indeed! No man more so.

Mrs. C. Why then, don't stare at me as if you was afraid, woman. Who's the wiser? We are not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I suppose!

Mrs. D. No, indeed! We should hope not.

Mrs. C. Very well, then! That's enough; who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose?

Mrs. D. (*Laughing.*) No, indeed!

Mrs. C. If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, a wicked old screw, why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself.

Mrs. D. It's the truest word that ever was spoke. It's a judgment on him.

Mrs. C. I wish it was a little heavier judgment; and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for her to see it. We knew pretty well that we

were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin. Open the bundle. Joe. (JOE *kneels, c., and unties bundle; draws out SCROOGE'S bed curtains.*)

Joe. What do you call this? Bed curtains!

Mrs. C. (*Laughing.*) Ah, bed curtains!

Joe. You don't mean to say you took 'em down rings and all, with him lying there?

Mrs. C. Yes, I do. Why not?

Joe. You were born to make your fortune, and you'll certainly do it.

Mrs. C. I certainly shan't hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as he was, I promise you, Joe. (JOE *pulls out blankets; examines them, holding lamp in one hand.*) Don't drop that oil upon the blankets, now.

Joe. His blankets?

Mrs. C. Whose else's do you think? He isn't likely to take cold without 'em, I dare say.

Joe. (*Looking up.*) I hope he didn't die of anything catching, eh?

Mrs. C. Don't you be afraid of that. I ain't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about him for such things, if he did. (JOE *holds up a shirt and examines it.*) Ah! you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me.

Joe. What do you call wasting of it?

Mrs. C. Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure. Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. If calico ain't good enough for such a purpose, it isn't good enough for anything. It's quite

as becoming to the body. He can't look uglier than he did in that one. (*JOE chalks the items on the wall and sums them up.*)

Joe. That's your account, and I wouldn't give another sixpence if I was to be boiled for not doing it. (*To MRS. D.*) Now for you, ma'am. (*Opens her bundle and takes out sheets, wearing apparel, boots, &c., and chalks her account on the wall.*) I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way I ruin myself. That's *your* account. If you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I'd repent of being so liberal, and knock off half a crown. (*Draws flannel bag from his pocket and pays the women.*)

Mrs. C. Ha, ha! This is the end of it, you see! He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha! (*Vision vanishes. GHOST and SCROOGE, R.*)

Scrooge. (*Shuddering.*) Spirit, I see, I see! The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. Good Spirit, let me see some tenderness connected with a death, or these dark scenes will be forever present to me.

Ghost. Follow me, then.

[*Exeunt, L. Front curtain. Music.*]

The next scene being set, curtain rises.

Enter GHOST, R., pointing to back of stage. SCROOGE follows — back curtain rises on VISION VIII. Room in BOB CRATCHIT'S house. MRS. C., PETER, and BELINDA seated near the fire, L. MRS. C., sewing. PETER reads from the Bible.

Peter. "And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them."

Mrs. C. (*Laying down her work, and covering her eyes with her hand.*) The color hurts my eyes. They are better now, again. It makes them weak by candle light; and I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time.

Peter. (*Closing the book.*) Past it, rather; but I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother.

Mrs. C. I have known him walk with — I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed —

Peter. And so have I, often.

Mrs. C. But he was very light to carry, and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble — no trouble. (*Noise outside.*) And there is your father at the door. (*Goes out, c. d., and returns with BOB, who greets the children.*)

Bob. (*Looking at MRS. C.'s work.*) How fast you work, my dear! They will be done long before Sunday.

Mrs. C. Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?

Bob. Yes, my dear, I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is; but you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child — (*sobs*) — my little child! (*Hurries out of the room, R., but soon returns, "bright and cheerful." They draw around the fire.*) I met Mr. Scrooge's nephew to-day, my dear. I had never seen him but once be-

fore, but he was very kind to me, and seeing that I looked, — just a little down, you know, — inquired what had happened to distress me. On which, — for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, — I told him. “I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit,” he said, “and heartily sorry for your good wife.” By-the-by, how he ever knew that, I don’t know.

Mrs. C. Knew what, my dear?

Bob. Why, that you were a good wife.

Peter. Everybody knows that.

Bob. Very well observed, my boy. I hope they do. “Heartily sorry,” he said, “for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,” he said, giving me his card, “that’s where I live. Pray come to me.” Now it wasn’t for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way; that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.

Mrs. C. I’m sure he’s a good soul.

Bob. You would be sure of it, my dear, if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn’t be at all surprised — mark what I say! — if he got Peter a better situation.

Mrs. C. Only hear that, Peter!

Belinda. And then Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself.

Peter. (*Laughing.*) Get along with you!

Bob. It’s just as likely as not, one of these days; though there’s plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim — shall we? or this first parting that there was among us?

All. Never, father!

Bob. And I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was, — although he was a little, little child, — we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.

All. No, never, father! (*Music. They cluster round and embrace him. Curtain.*)

Scrooge. Spectre, something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Then tell me what man that was whose death has been foreshadowed by you?

Ghost. Behold! (*Solemn Music. Curtain rises on VISION IX. SCENE: A lonely grave,* with a headstone bearing SCROOGE'S name.*)

Scrooge. Merciful Heaven! What is this? (*GHOST points, without speaking.*) Before I draw near to that stone to which you point, answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of the things that May be, only? (*GHOST still points. SCROOGE takes one or two steps towards the Vision, and stops, R. C.*) Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends to which, if persevered in, they must lead. But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me! (*GHOST, L. C., points. SCROOGE creeps towards the stone and reads aloud,*) EBENEZER SCROOGE! (*Staggers back.*) Good God! Is it then *my* death that has been foreshadowed? (*GHOST points to him, and then back to the grave.*) No,

* This scene may be roughly painted, in distemper, and hung at the back of the stage.

Spirit! O, no, no! Spirit! (*Clutches at its robe.*)
 Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be
 the man I must have been but for this intercourse.
 Why show me this, if I am past all hope? (*GHOST's
 hand trembles. SCROOGE falls before him.*) Good
 Spirit, your nature intercedes for me and pities me.
 Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you
 have shown me, by an altered life! I will honor Christ-
 mas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I
 will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The
 Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not
 shut out the lessons that they teach. O, tell me I may
 sponge away the writing on this stone!

[*Seizes the hand of the GHOST; GHOST
 shakes him off. SCROOGE remains on
 his knees, holding up his clasped hands.
 Tableau. Music. Curtain.*]

“NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND.”

SCROOGE'S Chamber, as in SCENE II. SCROOGE (*in dressing-gown and night-cap*) asleep in his chair. He starts, wakes, sobbing violently, and stares about him.

Scrooge. (*Dreamily.*) I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future! The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. O Jacob Marley! Heaven (*drops on his knees*) and the Christmas time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees! (*Looking about him.*) Yes, this room is mine! That bed is mine! (*Rises, goes to his bed and takes hold of the curtains.*) They are not torn down, — they are not torn down rings and all. They are here. I am here. The time before me is my own to make amends in; and the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be, I know they will be. (*During this soliloquy, he is hastily dressing.*) I don't know what to do (*half laughing — half crying*). I'm as light as a feather. I'm as happy as an angel. I am as merry as a school-boy. I'm as giddy as a drunken man. A Merry Christmas to everybody! A Happy New Year to all the world! Halloo, here! Whoop! Halloo! (*Fumps about the room; stops to take breath, and begins again.*) There's the saucepan that the gruel was in. There's the door by which the ghost of Jacob Marley entered. It's all right; it's all true; it all happened; ha, ha, ha! I don't know what day of the month it is. I don't know how long I've been among the Spirits. I

don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind! I don't care. I'd rather be a baby. Halloo! Whoop! Halloo, here! (*Church bells heard. He runs to window, L., opens it and puts out his head.*) Halloo, below, there! What's to-day?

Boy. (*Outside.*) Eh?

Scrooge. What's to-day, my fine fellow?

Boy. (*Very loud.*) To-day? Why, Christmas Day!

Scrooge. It's Christmas Day! I haven't missed it! The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can — of course they can. (*To the boy.*) Halloo, my fine fellow!

Boy. Halloo!

Scrooge. Do you know the poulterer's in the next street but one, at the corner?

Boy. I should hope I did.

Scrooge. (*Aside.*) An intelligent boy! A remarkable boy! (*To the boy.*) Do you know whether they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging up there? — not the little prize turkey; the big one?

Boy. What! the one as big as me!

Scrooge. (*Aside.*) What a delightful boy! It's a pleasure to talk to him. (*To boy.*) Yes, my buck!

Boy. It's hanging there now.

Scrooge. Is it? Go and buy it!

Boy. Walk-ER!

Scrooge. No, no, I'm in earnest! Go and buy it, and tell them to bring it here, that I may give them the directions where to take it. Come back with the man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes, and I'll give you half a

crown. (*Rubs his hands and whispers.*) I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's. He shan't know who sent it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob's will be. (*Writes on a card and goes to window again.*) Here's the turkey. Halloo! Whoop! How are you! Merry Christmas! Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town.* You must have a cab. (*Chuckles.*) Here, my boy; here's your half crown. (*Chuckles.*) And here's the address. (*Throws out card. — Chuckles.*) And here's the money for the turkey. (*Throws it out.*) And this is to pay for the cab. (*Throws out more money; chuckles, falls exhausted into his chair and laughs till he cries; rises again.*) And now I'll go and dine with Fred, if he'll let me in. What a surprise I shall give him! What a surprise it will be to him! (*Exit. Curtain.*)

* The name of any town in the vicinity of the place in which this piece is played, may be substituted here.

"THE END OF IT ALL."

SCENE: SCROOGE'S Office. SCROOGE *at his desk.*
Clock points at 9.15.

Scrooge. Quarter past nine and Bob not here yet! Ah, I thought I should catch him. (*Writes; then looks at clock, or takes out his watch.*) Eighteen minutes past nine, and — (*Enter BOB in great haste.*) Hallo! What do you mean by coming here at this time of day, Bob? (*Takes off hat and shawl, hangs them up, climbs on his stool, and begins to write very fast.*)

Bob. I am very sorry, sir. I *am* behind my time.

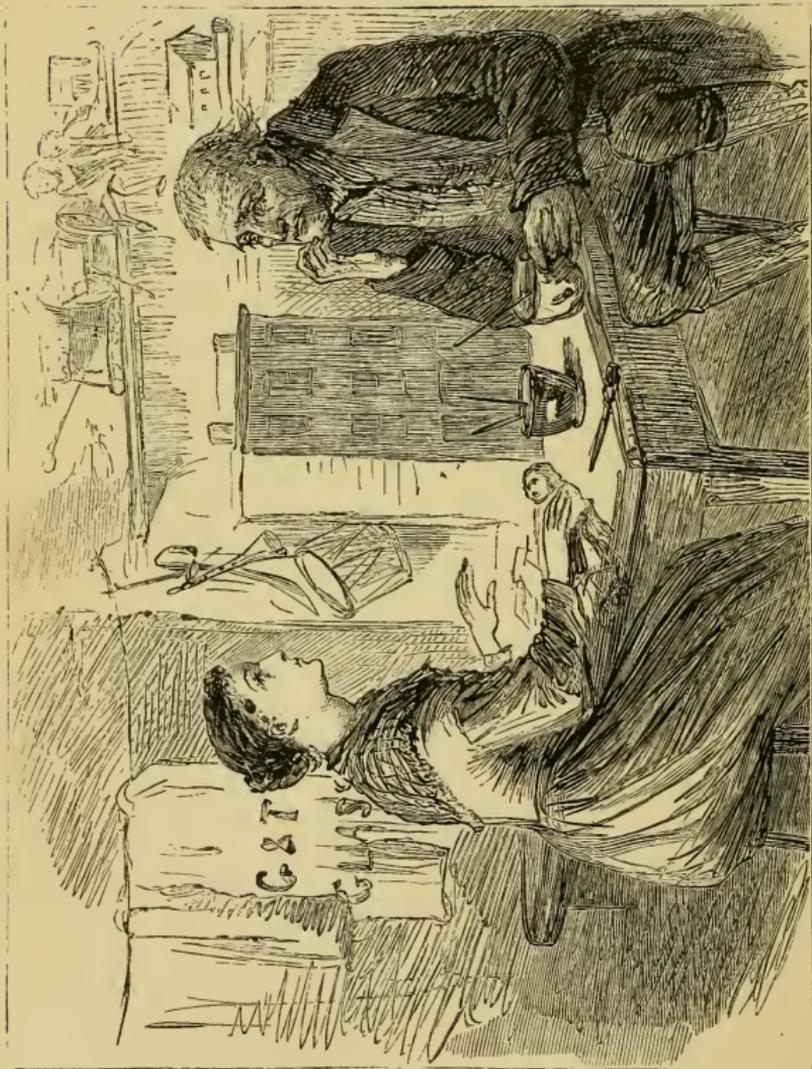
Scrooge. You are! Yes, I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.

Bob. (*Appearing at his door.*) It's only once a year, sir. It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir.

Scrooge. Now, I'll tell you what, my friend, I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore — (*Jumps off his stool and gives BOB a "dig in the ribs"*) — and, therefore, I'm about to raise your salary! (*BOB trembles, moves off, and seizes his ruler. SCROOGE claps him on the back.*) A Merry Christmas, Bob! A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob. Make up the fires, and buy another coal scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit. (*Curtain.*)



THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.



CALEB PLUMMER AND BERTHA.

From a design by S. EYTINGE, JR.

Engraved expressly for JAS. R. OSGOOD, & Co.'s Diamond Dickens.

THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.

[*For a description of characters and costumes, see Index, at the end of this volume.*]

THE CARRIER.

SCENE: Kitchen of JOHN PEERYBINGLE, *the Carrier.*

At back, a door; left of door, a window; L., two doors; C., a table spread for two persons; R. C., a cradle; R. a fireplace; kettle boiling on the hob; R. MRS. P., having made all preparations for tea, takes the baby from the cradle. At that moment, enter JOHN, C. D., with Boxer, his dog. He shakes the moisture from his cloak, throws down his hat, and embraces DOT.

Dot. O, goodness, John! What a state you're in with the weather!

John. (*Taking off his shawl and warming his hands.*) Why, you see, Dot, it, — it ain't exactly summer weather. So, no wonder!

Dot. (*Pouting.*) I wish you wouldn't call me Dot, John. I don't like it.

John. Why, what else are you? A dot, and — (*glancing at baby*), a dot and carry, — I won't say it, for fear I should spoil it; but I was very near a joke. I don't know as ever I was nearer.

Dot. (c.) (*Holding up the baby.*) Ain't he beautiful, John? Don't he look precious in his sleep?

John. (c.) Very precious, very much so. He generally *is* asleep — ain't he?

Dot. Lor, John! Good gracious, no!

John. (*Pondering.*) O! I thought his eyes was generally shut, — Halloo!

Dot. Goodness, John, how you startle one!

John. It ain't right for him to turn 'em up in that way! Is it? See how he's winking with both of 'em at once. And look at his mouth! Why, he's gasping like a gold and silver fish.

Dot. (*With much dignity.*) You don't deserve to be a father — you don't. But how should you know what little complaints children are troubled with, John? You wouldn't so much as know their names, you stupid fellow. (*Pinches his ear.*)

John. (*Pulling off his over-coat.*) No, it's very true, *Dot.* I don't know much about it. I only know that I've been fighting pretty stiffly with the wind to-night. It's been blowing north-east, straight into the cart, the whole way home.

Dot. Poor old man, so it has! (*Enter, L., TILLY SLOWBOY.*) Here, take the precious darling, Tilly, while I make myself of some use. Bless it, I could smother it with kissing it, — I could. Hie, then, good dog! Hie, Boxer, boy! (*Bustling about.*) Only let me make the tea first, John, and then I'll help you with the parcels, like a busy bee. "How doth the little," — and all the rest of it, you know, John. Did you ever learn: "How doth the little," — when you went to school, John?

John. Not to quite know it. I was very near it once. But I should only have spoilt it, I dare say.

Dot. Ha, ha, ha! what a dear old darling of a dunce you are, John, to be sure. (*Exit JOHN.*) There! There's the tea-pot ready on the hob! And there's the cold knuckle of ham; and there's the butter; and there's the crusty loaf, and all! And here's a clothes-basket for the small parcels, John, if you've got any there. Where are you, John? Don't let the dear child fall under the grate, Tilly, whatever you do!

[*Exit DOT, c. d., taking the basket.*

Re-enter, c., DOT with JOHN bringing in the basket filled with parcels. Cricket chirps. They place basket on the floor, L.*

John. Heyday! It's merrier than ever to-night, I think.

Dot. And it's sure to bring us good fortune, John. It always has done so. To have a cricket on the hearth is the luckiest thing in all the world! The first time I heard its cheerful little note, John, was on that night when you brought me home — when you brought me to my new home here; it's little mistress, nearly a year ago. You recollect, John?

John. O, yes, I should *think* so!

Dot. Its chirp was such a welcome to me! It seemed so full of promise and encouragement. It seemed to say, you would be kind and gentle with me and would not expect (I had a fear of that, John, then) to find an old head on the shoulders of your foolish

* Prompter will use a "bird-call" whistle for the cricket.

little wife. (JOHN *pats her on the head and then on the shoulder.*) It spoke the truth, John, when it seemed to say so; for you have ever been the best of husbands to me. This has been a happy home, John, and I love the cricket for its sake.

John. Why, so do I, then; so do I, Dot.

[DOT *lays her hand on his arm and looks into his face, then goes down on her knees, L., before the basket, and examines the parcels.*

Dot. There are not many of them to-night, John; but I saw some goods behind the cart just now; and though they give more trouble, perhaps, still they pay as well; so we have no reason to grumble — have we? Besides, you have been delivering, I dare say, as you came along?

John. (*Seated before the fire, R.*) O, yes, a good many.

Dot. Why, what's this round box! Heart alive, John, it's a wedding cake!

John. Leave a woman alone to find out that! Now a man would never have thought of it, whereas it's my belief that if you was to pack a wedding cake up in a tea chest, or a turn-up bedstead, or a pickled salmon keg, or any unlikely thing, a woman would be sure to find it out directly. Yes; I called for it at the pastry cook's.

Dot. (*Trying to lift it.*) And it weighs, I don't know what — whole hundred weights! Whose is it, John? Where is it going?

John. Read the writing on the other side.

Dot. Why, John! My goodness, John!

John. Ah, who'd have thought it?

Dot. (*Sitting on the floor, and shaking her head.*) You never mean to say that it's Gruff & Tackleton, the toy-maker. (*JOHN nods; DOT nods, and gazes at JOHN in astonishment.*)

Tilly. (*L. c. Trotting the baby.*) Was it Gruff's & Tackleton's, the toy-makers, then, and Would it call at pastry cooks for wedding cakes, and Did it's mothers know the boxes when its fathers brought them home.

Dot. And that is really to come about! Why, she and I were girls at school together, John. And he's as old! as unlike her! Why, how many years older than you, is Gruff & Tackleton, John?

John. How many more cups of tea shall I drink to-night at one sitting, than Gruff & Tackleton ever took in four, I wonder? (*Draws up to table.*) As to eating, I eat but little, but that little I enjoy, Dot.

[*DOT stands thoughtfully near the basket, pushing the cake-box with her foot. JOHN calls to her; raps on the table with his knife; then rises, and going to her, touches her on the shoulder. She starts, laughs, and takes her place at table.*

Dot. So these are all the parcels, are they, John?

John. That's all. (*Lays down his knife and fork and draws a long breath.*) Why — no — I — I declare — I've clean forgotten the old gentleman!

Dot. The old gentleman?

John. In the cart. He was asleep among the straw, the last time I saw him. I've very nearly re-

membered him twice since I came in; but he went out of my head again. (*Rises and hurries to the door, c., candle in hand.*) Halloo! Ya-hip, there! Rouse up! That's my hearty!

Enter old gentleman, c.

You're such an undeniable good sleeper, sir, that I have half a mind to ask you where the other six are,—only that would be a joke, and I know I should spoil it. (*Aside.*) Very near, though—very near! (*Stranger bows to DOT, and takes a seat near the fire, R.*) I found him sitting by the roadside, upright as a milestone, and almost as deaf!

Dot. (*At table.*) Sitting in the open air, John?

John. (L. c.) In the open air, just at dusk. "Carriage paid," he said, and gave me eighteen pence. Then he got in, and there he is.

Stranger. If you please, I was to be left till called for. Don't mind me. (*Takes a book and spectacles from his pocket and reads. DOT and JOHN exchange glances. Stranger looking from DOT to JOHN.*) Your daughter, my good friend?

John. (*At table.*) Wife.

Stran. Niece?

John. (*Very loud.*) Wife!

Stran. Indeed! Surely? Very young! (*Reads again.*) Baby, yours? (*JOHN nods.*) Girl?

John. (*Roars.*) Bo-o-oy!

Stran. Also very young, eh?

Dot. (*c. Quickly and very loud.*) Two months and three da-ays. Vaccinated just six weeks ago-o! Took very fine-ly! Considered by the doctor a remarkably

beautiful child! Takes notice in a way quite wonderful! May seem impossible to you, but feels his legs al-ready! (*Holds up the baby. TILLY dances around them.*)

John. Hark! He is called for, sure enough. There's somebody at the door. Open it, Tilly. (*Door opens, c.*)

Enter CALEB PLUMMER.

Caleb. (R. c.) Good evening, John! Good evening, mum! Good evening, Tilly! Good evening, Unbeknown! How's baby, mum? Boxer's pretty well, I hope?

Dot. All thriving, Caleb. I'm sure you need only look at the dear child, for one, to know that.

Caleb. And I am sure I need only look at you for another; or at John for another; or at Tilly, as far as that goes. Or certainly at Boxer.

John. Busy just now, Caleb?

Caleb. Why, pretty well, John. Pretty much so. There's rather a run on Noah's Arks at present. I could have wished to improve upon the Family, but I don't see how it's to be done at the price. It would be a satisfaction to one's mind to make it clearer which was Shems and Hams, and which was wives. Flies ain't on that scale, neither, as compared with elephants, you know. Ah, well! Have you got anything in the parcel line for me, John?

John. (*Takes from his pocket a very small flower-pot; removes the wrappings.*) There it is! Not so much as a leaf damaged. Full of buds!

Caleb. (*Taking flower-pot.*) Thank you, John!

John. Dear, Caleb, — very dear, at this season.

Caleb. Never mind that ; it would be cheap to me, whatever it cost. Anything else, John ?

John. (*Rising.*) A small box. (*Taking it from his pocket.*) Here you are !

Caleb. (*Taking it and spelling out the address.*) "For Caleb Plummer — with cash." With cash, John ? I don't think it's for me !

John. (*Looking over his shoulder.*) With care. Where do you make out cash ?

Caleb. O, to be sure ! It's all right. With care ! Yes, yes, that's mine. It might have been with cash, indeed, if my dear boy in the golden South Americas had lived, John. You loved him like a son — didn't you ? You needn't say you did. *I* know, of course. Caleb Plummer — with care. Yes, yes ; it's all right. It's a box of dolls' eyes for my daughter's work. I wish it was her *own* sight in a box, John.

John. I wish it was, or could be.

Caleb. Thank'ee. You speak very hearty. To think that she should never see the dolls, and them a-staring at her, so bold, all day long ! That's where it cuts. What's the damage, John ?

John. I'll damage you, if you inquire. Dot, very near ? Did I come very near ?

Caleb. Well, it's like you to say so ; it's your kind way. Let me see, I think that's all.

John. I think not ; try again.

Caleb. Something for our governor, eh ? To be sure ! That's what I came for. But my head's so running on them arks and things ! He hasn't been here — has he ?

John. Not he. He's too busy courting.

Caleb. He's coming round, though, for he told me to keep on the near side of the road, going home, and it was ten to one he'd take me up. I'd better go. By-the-by, you couldn't have the goodness to let me pinch Boxer's tail, mum, for half a moment — could you?

Dot. Why, Caleb, what a question!

Caleb. O, never mind, mum. He mightn't like it, perhaps. There's a small order just come in for barking dogs, and I should wish to go as close to natur' as I could for sixpence. That's all; never mind, mum.

[Shoulders the large box and goes towards the door.]

Enter TACKLETON, C.

Tackleton. (*To Caleb.*) O, you're here, are you? Wait a bit! I'll take you home. John Peerybingle, my service to you. More of my service to your pretty wife. (*Crosses to L., and stands with hat over his eyes and his hands in his pockets, looking at DOT.*) Handsomer every day! Better, too, if possible! (*Aside.*) And younger, that's the devil of it.

[Caleb sits down on the cake-box and goes to sleep, near the door, c.]

Dot. I should be astonished at your paying compliments, Mr. Tackleton, but for your condition.

Tac. You know all about it, then?

Dot. I have got myself to believe it, somehow.

Tac. After a hard struggle, I suppose?

Dot. Very.

[Gives baby to TILLY, who sits with it near cradle. DOT takes a seat near the fire, facing stranger. Leans her head on her hand and looks at fire.]

Tac. (L.) In three days' time. Next Thursday. The last day of the first month in the year. That's my wedding day. (*Rattles his money in his pocket.*) That's my wedding day!

John. (*Crossing to L.*) Why, it's our wedding day, too!

Tac. Ha, ha! Odd! You're just such another couple. Just! (*Nudges JOHN with his elbow.*) I say! A word with you. (*Leads him one side, L.*) You'll come to the wedding! We're in the same boat, you know.

John. How in the same boat?

Tac. (*Nudging him.*) A little disparity, you know. Come and spend an evening with us, beforehand.

John. Why?

Tac. Why? That's a new way of receiving an invitation. Why, for pleasure, — sociability, you know, and all that.

John. I thought you were never sociable.

Tac. Tchah! It's of no use to be anything but free with you, I see. Why then, the truth is, you have a — what tea-drinking people call a sort of a comfortable appearance together, you and your wife. *We* know better, you know, but —

John. No, we don't know better. What are you talking about?

Tac. Well, we don't know better, then. We'll agree that we don't. As you like, what does it matter? I was going to say, as you have that sort of appearance, your company will produce a favorable effect on Mrs. Tackleton, that will be. And, though

I don't think your good lady is very friendly to me, in this matter, still she can't help herself from falling into my views, for there's a compactness and cosiness of appearance about her that always tells, even in an indifferent case. You'll say you'll come?

John. We have arranged to keep our wedding day (as far as that goes) at home. We've made the promise to ourselves these six months. We think, you see, that home —

Tac. Bah! What's home? Four walls and a ceiling. (*Cricket chirps.*) Why don't you kill that cricket? *I* would. I always do. I hate their noise. There are four walls and a ceiling at my house. Come to me.

John. You kill your crickets, eh?

Tac. (*Setting his heel on the ground.*) Scrunch 'em, sir! You'll say you'll come? It's as much your interest as mine, you know, that the women should persuade each other that they're quiet and contented, and couldn't be better off. I know their way. Whatever one woman says, another woman is determined to clinch, always. There's that spirit of emulation among 'em, sir, that if your wife says to my wife, "I'm the happiest woman in the world, and mine's the best husband in the world, and I dote on him," my wife will say the same to yours, or more, and half believe it.

John. Do you mean to say she don't, then?

Tac. Don't? Don't what? (*Winking at him.*)

John. Don't believe it? (*Eying him hard.*)

Tac. (*Laughing.*) Ah! you dog, you're joking! I have the humor, sir, to marry a young wife, and a

pretty wife. I'm able to gratify that humor, and I do. It's my whim. But — now look there! (*Points to DOT. JOHN, perplexed, looks at her, then at TACKLETON; back at DOT, and then at TACKLETON again.*) She honors and obeys, no doubt, you know, and that, as I am not a man of sentiment, is quite enough for me. But do you think there's anything more in it?

John. I think that I should chuck any man out of the window who said there wasn't.

Tac. (*Quickly.*) Exactly so. To be sure! Doubtless you would. Of course, — I'm certain of it. Good night! Pleasant dreams! (*JOHN looks troubled. TACKLETON speaks compassionately.*) Good night, my dear friend, I'm off. We're exactly alike in reality, I see. You won't give us to-morrow evening? Well! Next day, you go out visiting, I know. I'll meet you there, and bring my wife that is to be. It will do her good. You're agreeable? Thank'ee! (*DOT gives a loud cry, and rising from her chair, gazes at stranger, who has risen and stands facing her.*) What's that?

John. Dot! Mary! Darling! What's the matter? (*All cluster, R. C., about her. CALEB wakes, starts up and seizes TILLY by the hair, and immediately apologizes. JOHN takes DOT in his arms.*) Mary, are you ill? What is it? Tell me, dear!

[*DOT beats her hands together, and falls into a fit of laughter. She then sinks on the floor, and, covering her face with her apron, sobs; then laughs and cries alternately.*

Dot. O, John, how cold I am!

[*He leads her to the fire, where she resumes her former place and attitude. The stranger does not move.*]

I'm better, John. I'm quite well, now. I—John! Only a fancy, John, dear; a kind of shock,—a something coming suddenly before my eyes. I don't know what it was. It's quite gone—quite gone.

Tac. (L.) (*Looking suspiciously about.*) I'm glad it's gone. (*Aside.*) I wonder where it's gone, and what it was. Humph! Caleb, come here! Who's that with the gray hair?

Caleb. (*Whispering.*) I don't know, sir. Never see him before in all my life. A beautiful figure for a nut-cracker! Quite a new model! With a screw-jaw, opening down into his waistcoat, he'd be lovely.

Tac. Not ugly enough.

Caleb. (*Contemplatively.*) Or for a match-box, either. What a model! Unscrew his head to put the matches in; turn him heels up'ards for the light; and what a match-box for a gentleman's mantel-shelf, just as he stands!

Tac. Not half ugly enough. Nothing in him at all. Come, bring that box. (*Turning to Dot.*) All right now, I hope?

Dot. O, quite gone, quite gone. (*Waving TACKLETON away.*) Good night!

Tac. (*Near door, c.*) Good night! Good night, John Peerybingle! Take care how you carry that box, Caleb. Let it fall and I'll murder you. (*Opens door.*)

Dark as pitch, and weather worse than ever, eh?
Good night!

[*Exit TACKLETON, C., followed by CALEB, with the cake-box on his head.*

John. (*To DOT, looking towards stranger.*) He don't belong to them, you see! I must give him a hint to go.

Stranger. (*Approaching him.*) I beg your pardon, friend, the more so as I fear your wife has not been well. But the attendant, whom my infirmity (*touches his ear*) renders almost indispensable, not having arrived, I fear there must be some mistake. The bad night which made the shelter of your comfortable cart so acceptable, is still as bad as ever. Would you, in your kindness, suffer me to rent a bed here?

Dot. (*Quickly.*) Yes, yes, yes, certainly!

John. (*Surprised.*) O! — well, I don't object. But still, I'm not quite sure that —

Dot. (*Rising.*) Hush, dear John!

John. Why, he's stone deaf.

Dot. (*Crossing to L.*) I know he is, but — (*to stranger.*) Yes, sir, certainly! Yes, certainly (*to JOHN*). I'll make him up a bed directly, John. (*Hurries off, L. JOHN looks after in astonishment.*)

Tilly. (*Trotting the baby.*) Did its mothers make it up a beds then, and did its hair grow brown and curly when its caps was lifted off, and frighten it, a precious pets, a-sitting by the fires!

John. (*Pacing the room, repeating.*) And frightened it a precious pets, a-sitting by the fires. What frightened Dot, I wonder?

Dot. (*Entering, L.*) Your room is ready, sir.
(*Exit stranger, L., with candle. JOHN sits near fire.*
DOT fills JOHN's pipe.) I feel quite well again, John.
quite well.

[*DOT brings a low stool, places it at his feet, sits down, lights his pipe and gives it to him. Tableau. Cricket chirps.*
Curtain.

THE BLIND GIRL.

SCENE: ROOM of CALEB PLUMMER, *the toy-maker; at back a door and window; the room is in a very dilapidated condition, and the furniture, scanty and poor. All kinds of toys, in different stages of completion, lie about the room, and hang on the walls. On a clothes-line, L., upper corner, is hung a coarse sackcloth coat, on the back of which is to be seen, in large letters "G. & T. — Glass."* CALEB, seated at a bench, R., is at work on a toy house. BERTHA, seated on a low stool, C., is making dolls' dresses.

Bertha. So you were out in the rain last night, father, in your beautiful new coat?

Caleb. (R.) In my beautiful, new great-coat.

Ber. How glad I am you bought it, father!

Caleb. And of such a tailor, too. Quite a fashionable tailor. It's too good for me.

Ber. (*Resting from her work, and laughing.*) Too good, father! What can be too good for you?

Caleb. (*Watching her sharply.*) I'm half ashamed to wear it, though, upon my word! When I hear the boys and people say behind me, "Halloo! Here's a swell!" I don't know which way to look. And when the beggar wouldn't go away last night, — and when I said I was a very common man, — said "No, your honor! Bless your honor, don't say that!" I was quite ashamed. I really felt as if I hadn't a right to wear it.

Bertha. (*Clasping her hands.*) I see you, father, as plainly as if I had the eyes I never want when you are with me. A blue coat —

Caleb. Bright blue.

Ber. Yes, yes! Bright blue! The color I can just remember in the blessed sky! You told me it was blue before. A bright blue coat —

Caleb. Made loose to the figure.

Ber. (*Laughing heartily.*) Yes! loose to the figure! And in it, you, dear father, with your merry eye, your smiling face, your free step, and your dark hair — looking so young and handsome!

Caleb. Hallo! Hallo! I shall be vain presently.

Ber. I think you are already. I know you, father! (*Pointing at him.*) Ha, ha, ha! I've found you out, you see!

Caleb. (*Stepping back and looking at his work.*) There we are! As near the real thing as sixpenn'orth of half-pence is to sixpence. What a pity that the whole front of the house opens at once! If there was only a staircase in it, now, and regular doors to the rooms to go in at! But that's the worst of my calling, I'm always deluding myself, and swindling myself. (*Takes his seat and resumes work.*)

Ber. You are speaking quite softly. You are not tired, father?

Caleb. Tired! What should tire me, Bertha? I was never tired. What does it mean? (*Sings.*)

Enter TACKLETON, C.

Tac. What! You're singing, are you? Go it! I can't sing. I can't afford to sing. I'm glad *you* can.

I hope you can afford to work, too. (*CALEB rises and stands by his bench, facing up the stage.*) Hardly time for both, I should think?

Caleb. (*Whispering.*) If you could only see him, Bertha, how he's winking at me! Such a man to joke! You'd think, if you didn't know him, he was in earnest — wouldn't you now?

[*BERTHA smiles and nods.* *TACKLETON remains at back, examining toys.*

Tac. (*Grumbling.*) The bird that can sing, and won't sing, must be made to sing, they say. What about the owl that can't sing, and oughtn't to sing, and will sing; is there anything that *he* should be made to do?

Caleb. (*Whispers to BERTHA.*) The extent to which he's winking at this moment. O, my gracious!

Ber. Always merry and light-hearted with us!

Tac. O! You're there, are you? (*Aside.*) Poor idiot! (*Comes down to BERTHA.*) Well, and being there,*—how are you?

Ber. Oh! well; quite well. And as happy as even you can wish me to be; as happy as you would make the whole world, if you could!

Tac. (*Aside.*) Poor idiot! No gleam of reason. Not a gleam. (*BERTHA seizes his hand and kisses it.*) What's the matter now?

Ber. I stood it close beside my pillow when I went to sleep last night, and remembered it in my dreams. And when the day broke, and the glorious red sun, — the *red* sun, father? (*TACKLETON goes to L.*)

Caleb. Red in the mornings and the evenings, Bertha.

Ber. (c.) When it rose, and the bright light I almost fear to strike myself against in walking, came into the room, I turned the little tree towards it, and blessed Heaven for making things so precious, and blessed you for sending them to cheer me!

Tac. (*Seated, L. Aside.*) Bedlam broke loose! We shall arrive at the strait waistcoat and mufflers soon. We're getting on! Bertha, come here.

Ber. O, I can come straight to you! You needn't guide me. (*Rises and goes to him.*)

Tac. Shall I tell you a secret, Bertha?

Ber. (*Eagerly.*) If you will.

Tac. This is the day on which little what's-her-name, the spoilt child, Peerybingle's wife, pays her regular visit to you, — makes her fantastic picnic here, — ain't it?

Ber. Yes, this is the day.

Tac. I thought so. I should like to join the party.

Ber. Do you hear that, father?

Caleb. Yes, yes, I hear it; (*aside*) but I don't believe it. It's one of my lies, I've no doubt.

Tac. You see I — I want to bring the Peerybingles a little more into company with May Fielding. I am going to be married to May —

Ber. (*Starting back.*) Married!

Tac. (*Aside.*) She's such a con-founded idiot that I was afraid she'd never comprehend me. Ah, Bertha! Married! Church, parson, clerk, beadle, glass-coach, bells, breakfast, bridecake, favors, marrow-bones, cleavers, and all the rest of the tomfoolery. A wedding, you know! A wedding! Don't you know what a wedding is?

Ber. (*Gently.*) I know. I understand!

Tac. Do you? (*Aside.*) It's more than I expected. Well! On that account I want to join the party, and to bring May and her mother. I'll send in a little something or other, before the afternoon. A cold leg of mutton, or some comfortable trifle of that sort. You'll expect me?

Ber. Yes. (*Turns and goes up the stage, R.*)

Tac. (*Aside.*) I don't think you will, for you seem to have forgotten all about it already. Caleb!

Caleb. (*Aside.*) I may venture to say I'm here, I suppose. (*Aloud.*) Sir!

Tac. Take care she don't forget what I've been saying to her. (*Goes towards door, c.*)

Caleb. She never forgets. It's one of the few things she ain't clever in.

Tac. (*Aside.*) Every man thinks his own geese swans. Poor devil!

[*Exit TACKLETON.* CALEB resumes his work. BERTHA returns to her seat by his side and takes her sewing again. A pause.

Ber. (*Sorrowfully.*) Father, I'm lonely in the dark. I want my eyes, — my patient, willing eyes.

Caleb. (*Leaving his work and drawing his chair near her, c.*) Here they are. Always ready. They are more yours than mine, Bertha, any hour in the four-and-twenty. What shall your eyes do for you, dear?

Ber. Look round the room, father.

Caleb. (*Looking about.*) All right! No sooner said than done, Bertha.

Ber. Tell me about it.

Caleb. It's much the same as usual. Homely, but very snug. The gay colors on the walls; the bright flowers on the plates and dishes; the shining wood, where there are beams or panels; the general cheerfulness and neatness of the building, make it very pretty.

Ber. (*Touching him.*) You have your working-dress on, and are not so gallant as when you wore the handsome coat!

Caleb. Not quite so gallant. Pretty brisk, though.

Ber. (*Draws nearer, and puts one arm around his neck.*) Father, tell me something about May. She is very fair?

Caleb. She is, indeed!

Ber. (*Thoughtfully.*) Her hair is dark — darker than mine. Her voice is sweet and musical, I know. I have often loved to hear it. Her shape —

Caleb. There's not a doll's in all the room to equal it. And her eyes! — (*Checks himself, and hums a tune.*)

Ber. Our friend, father; our benefactor. I am never tired, you know, of hearing about him. Now, was I ever?

Caleb. (*Uneasily.*) Of course not, and with reason.

Ber. Ah! With how much reason! Then tell me again about him, dear father. Many times again! His face is benevolent, kind, and tender. Honest and true, I am sure it is. The manly heart that tries to cloak all favors with a show of roughness and unwillingness, beats in its every look and glance.

Caleb. (*Desperately.*) And makes it noble.

Ber. And makes it noble! He is older than May, father?

Caleb. Ye-es. He's a little older than May. But that don't signify.

Ber. O, father, yes! To be his patient companion in infirmity and age; to be his gentle nurse in sickness, and his constant friend in suffering and sorrow; to know no weariness in working for his sake; to watch him, tend him, sit beside his bed and talk to him awake, and pray for him asleep; what privileges these would be! What opportunities for proving all her truth and her devotion to him! Would she do all this, dear father?

Caleb. No doubt of it.

Ber. I love her, father; I can love her from my soul. (*Lays her head on his shoulder and weeps.*)

[*Curtain, — or continue as follows: —*

Enter, C. D., MR. and MRS. PEERYBINGLE, carrying baskets and parcels, which they deposit at back; they are followed by TILLY, with the baby; Boxer brings up the rear; exchange of salutations; TILLY places baby in cot, R., up the stage; DOT, BERTHA, and TILLY spread the table; general conversation. Enter TACKLETON, accompanied by MRS. FIELDING and MAY, and followed by a man with bundles; greetings. Exit man; MRS. FIELDING and TACKLETON sit, L.; CALEB and JOHN, R.; dinner being ready, TACKLETON leads MRS. FIELDING to the post of honor; the rest seat themselves as below.

BERTHA'S PICNIC.

SCENE, the same. *c.* A table, laid for dinner. At head of table is seated DOT; on her right, MRS. FIELDING; on her left, MAY; next to MRS. F., TACKLETON; next to MAY, BERTHA, by whom sits CALEB; at foot, JOHN PEERYBINGLE. *Up the stage, R., a cot, in which is the baby.* TILLY seated by it.

Dot. Ah, May! Dear, dear, what changes! To talk of those merry school-days makes one young again.

Tackleton. Why, you ain't particularly old, at any time — are you?

Dot. Look at my sober, plodding husband there! He adds twenty years to my age, at least. Don't you, John?

John. Forty!

Dot. (*Laughing.*) How many *you'll* add to May's, I'm sure I don't know. But she can't be much less than a hundred years of age on her next birthday.

Tac. (*Savagely.*) Ha, ha!

Dot. Dear, dear! Only to remember how we used to talk, at school, about the husbands we would choose! I don't know how young, and how handsome, and how gay, and how lively mine was not to be! And as to May's! Ah, dear! I don't know whether to laugh or cry, when I think what silly girls we were. Even the very persons themselves — real live young men — we fixed on sometimes. We little thought how things would come about. I never fixed on John, I'm sure. I never so much as thought of him. And if I had told

you you were ever to be married to Mr. Tackleton, why, you'd have slapped me — wouldn't you, May?

Tac. (*Laughing boisterously.*) You couldn't help yourselves, for all that. You couldn't resist us, you see. Here we are! Here we are! Where are your gay young bridegrooms now?

Dot. Some of them are dead, and some of them forgotten. Some of them, if they could stand among us at this moment, would not believe we were the same creatures; would not believe that what they saw and heard was real, and we *could* forget them so. No! They would not believe one word of it!

John. (*Gently.*) Why, Dot, little woman!

Mrs. Fielding. Well, well! Girls are girls, and by-gones, by-gones; and so long as young people are young and thoughtless, they will probably conduct themselves like young and thoughtless persons. I thank Heaven I have always found in my daughter May, a dutiful and obedient child, for which I take no credit to myself, though I have every reason to believe it is entirely owing to me. That Mr. Tackleton is, in an eligible point of view, a son-in-law to be desired, no one in their senses can doubt. (*A pause.*) The general result of my observation and experience is, that those marriages in which there is least of what is romantically called love, are always the happiest; and I anticipate the greatest amount of bliss from the approaching nuptials of to-morrow.

John. (*Raising his glass.*) I propose: To-morrow! The Wedding Day! (*They drink.* JOHN rises and puts on his overcoat.) Good-by! I shall be back before long. Good-by, all!

[BERTHA, leaving the table, comes down

and sits, L. CALEB rises and watches her anxiously from L. C.

Caleb. (*Abstractedly.*) Good-by, John!

John. (*Bending over cot, R.*) Good-by, young shaver! (*Kisses the child.*) Good-by! Time will come, I suppose, when *you'll* turn out into the cold, my little friend, and leave your old father to enjoy his pipe and his rheumatics in the chimney corner; eh? Where's Dot?

Dot. (*Starting.*) I'm here, John.

John. (*Clapping his hands.*) Come, come! Where's the pipe?

Dot. I quite forgot the pipe, John!

John. Forgot the pipe! *You* forget the pipe!

Dot. I'll — I'll fill it directly. It's soon done.

[*Takes the pipe from his coat pocket, and clumsily fills and lights it. TACKLETON watches her sharply.*

John. Why, what a clumsy Dot you are to-day! I could have done it better myself, I verily believe!

[*Exit JOHN, C., followed by TACKLETON.*

Caleb. (*Approaching BERTHA, L., and speaking in a low tone.*) Bertha! what has happened? How changed you are, my darling, in a few hours. *You* silent and dull all day! What is it? Tell me!

Ber. (*Bursting into tears.*) O, father, father! O, my hard, hard fate!

Caleb. But think how cheerful and how happy you have been, Bertha! How good, and how much loved, by many people.

Ber. That strikes me to the heart, dear father! Always so mindful of me! Always so kind to me!

Caleb. (*Hesitatingly.*) To be — to be blind, Bertha, my poor dear, is a great affliction; but —

Ber. I have never felt it! I have never felt it, in its fulness, never! I have sometimes wished that I could see you, or could see him — only once, dear father, only for one little minute — that I might know what it is I treasure up, and (*laying her hands on her breast*) hold here; that I might be sure I have it right. But I have never had these feelings long. They have passed away, and left me tranquil and contented.

Caleb. And they will again.

Ber. But, father! O, my good, gentle father, bear with me, if I am wicked! This is not the sorrow that weighs me down! Bring her to me. I cannot hold it closed and shut within myself. Bring her to me, father. (*He hesitates.*) May. Bring May!

[MAY, *hearing her, comes down and touches her on the arm.* CALEB *withdraws to R.*

May. Bertha!

Ber. (*Turning and taking both her hands.*) May! Look into my face, dear heart! Sweet heart! Read it with your beautiful eyes, and tell me if the truth is written on it.

May. Dear Bertha, yes!

Ber. (*Putting her arms around MAY, and drawing her nearer.*) There is not, in my soul, a wish or thought that is not for your good, bright May! There is not, in my soul, a grateful recollection stronger than the deep remembrance which is stored there, of the many, many times when, in the full pride of sight and beauty, you have had consideration for Blind Bertha, even when we two were children, or when Bertha was

as much a child as ever blindness can be. Every blessing on your head! Light upon your happy course! (*Holds her closer.*) Not the less, my dear May, — not the less, my bird, because, to-day, the knowledge that you are to be *his* wife has wrung my heart almost to breaking! Father — May — Mary! O, forgive me that it is so, for the sake of all he has done to relieve the weariness of my dark life; and for the sake of the belief you have in me, when I call Heaven to witness that I could not wish him married to a wife more worthy of his goodness!

[*She sinks slowly on her knees, and hides her face in MAY'S dress.*]

Caleb. (R.) Great Power! Have I deceived her from her cradle, but to break her heart at last!

Dot. (*Coming down quickly.*) Come, come, dear Bertha! come away with me! Give her your arm, May. So! How composed she is, you see, already; and how good it is of her to mind us! (*Kisses her.*) Come away, dear Bertha. Come! And here's her good father will come with her — won't you, Caleb? To — be — sure!

[*Exeunt* CALEB, BERTHA, and DOT, L.
MRS. FIELDING *remains at table.* *Re-enter* DOT.]

Dot. (*Drawing chair to fire, R.*) So bring me the precious baby, Tilly; and while I have it in my lap, here's Mrs. Fielding, Tilly, will tell me all about the management of babies, and put me right in twenty points where I'm as wrong as can be. Won't you, Mrs. Fielding?

[*Curtain.*]

THE CRISIS.

SCENE: the same. *Time, evening.* CALEB at work at his bench, R. BERTHA seated near him. DOT and MRS. FIELDING conversing together at fire. TACKLETON and MAY, L. At back, L., TILLY with baby. *Barking of a dog is heard, followed by a heavy step. Door, c., opens.*

Bertha. (*Starting and listening.*) Whose step is that?

John. (*Entering.*) Whose step? Why, mine!

Ber. (*Rising.*) The other step. The man's tread behind you!

John. (*Laughing.*) She's not to be deceived. (*Turning and going to open door.*) Come along, sir. You'll be welcome! Never fear!

Enter STRANGER.

He's not so much a stranger, that you haven't seen him once, Caleb. You'll give him house-room till we go?

Caleb. O, surely, John, and take it as an honor.

John. He's the best company on earth, to talk secrets in. I have reasonable good lungs, but he tries 'em, I can tell you. (*Very loud to stranger.*) Sit down, sir. (*He sits, up the stage, R.*) All friends here, and glad to see you. (*To BERTHA.*) A chair in the chimney corner, and leave to sit quite silent and look pleasantly about him, is all he cares for. He's easily pleased. (*DOT crosses to c., and stands by JOHN.*)

Bertha. (*Softly.*) Father, who is it? Describe him to me.

[*CALEB describes STRANGER to her in a low tone. When he has finished BERTHA sighs and turns away.*

John. (*Embracing wife, c.*) A clumsy Dot she was this afternoon! And yet I like her, somehow. See yonder, Dot. (*Points to STRANGER. DOT turns her head towards STRANGER, and then looks down.*) He's — ha, ha, ha! — he's full of admiration for you! Talked of nothing else, the whole way here. Why, he's a brave old boy! I like him for it!

Dot. (*Glancing uneasily about the room.*) I wish he'd had a better subject, John.

John. A better subject! There's no such thing. Come, off with the great-coat! (*DOT assists him.*) Off with the thick shawl, off with the heavy wrappers, and a cosy half hour by the fire! (*To Mrs. FIELDING.*) My humble service. Mistress. A game at cribbage, you and I? That's hearty. The cards and board, Dot. (*She brings them.*) And a glass of beer here, if there's any left, small wife.

[*Mrs. FIELDING and JOHN sit down and play, up the stage, R. DOT and the STRANGER go out quietly. TACKLETON follows them. Mrs. FIELDING and JOHN play. After a time, TACKLETON returns and touches JOHN on the arm.*

Tac. I'm sorry to disturb you, but a word with you directly.

John. I'm going to deal. It's a crisis.

Tac. It is. Come here, man!

John. (*Rising and speaking hurriedly.*) What's the matter? (*MRS. FIELDING remains seated, occupied with her cards.*)

Tac. Hush! John Peerybingle, I'm sorry for this. I am, indeed. I have been afraid of it. I have suspected it from the first.

John. (*Anxiously.*) What is it?

Tac. Hush! I'll show you, if you'll come with me. (*They go up the stage.*) A moment! Can you bear to look through that window, do you think?

John. Why not? (*Moves towards window.*)

Tac. (*Checking him.*) A moment more. Don't commit any violence. It's of no use. It's dangerous, too. You're a strong-made man; and you might do murder before you know it.

[*JOHN looks at him and recoils, then strides to the window, left of door, c. TACKLETON follows him. As he reaches it, the darkness without is illumined, and two figures, DOT and the STRANGER, are scen. The STRANGER has removed his wig, and revealed a young man. He has his arm about DOT, and is talking to her. As JOHN looks, DOT turns to STRANGER, and adjusts his wig, laughing. JOHN raises his clinched hand, opens it and covers TACKLETON'S eyes with it, then falls into a chair. The vision disappears. JOHN recovers himself, and slowly puts on his over-coat and shawl, and makes other preparations for departure.*

Dot. (*Entering.*) Now, John, dear! (*Exit JOHN.*)
Good-night, May. Good-night, Bertha!

[*Kisses both; prepares to go.* BERTHA
seated, R. C., weeping.

Tilly. (*Walking up and down past TACKLETON
with baby in her arms.*) Did the knowledge that
it was to be its wives, then, wring its hearts almost to
breaking; and did its fathers deceive it from its cra-
dles, but to break its hearts at last! (*TACKLETON
scowls at her.*) Did it, then!

Dot. Now, Tilly, give me the baby! Good-night,
Mr. Tackleton. Where's John, for goodness' sake?

Tac. (*At back, L.*) He's going to walk beside the
horse's head.

Dot. What! John walk? To-night?

Tac. Yes!

[*Exeunt, all but CALEB and BERTHA.*

Caleb. (*Sitting near the fire with his head in his
hands, and watching BERTHA. Sadly.*) Have I
deceived her from her cradle, but to break her heart
at last. [Curtain.

"REPARATION."

SCENE: JOHN PEERYBINGLE'S Kitchen, as in SCENE I.; *Time, early morning; JOHN seated, R., before the embers of last night's fire, his head buried in his hands.*

John. (*In a low tone.*) He lies there (*looking towards L.*) under my roof. One blow would beat in the door. "You might do murder before you know it," said Tackleton. How *could* it be murder, if you gave the villain time to grapple with you hand to hand! He is a younger man than you; yes, yes, a younger man; some lover who won the heart that *you* have never touched. Some lover of her early choice, of whom she has thought and dreamed, for whom she has pined and pined, when you fancied her so happy by your side. O, agony to think of it! (*DOT glides in, L. U. E. Her hair hangs down over her shoulders. She crosses, noiselessly, to JOHN, and falling at his feet, looks up into his face. He raises his head and looks at her; takes her head in his hands and kisses her forehead; then buries his face again in his hands. Exit DOT, sobbing.*) O! how desolate I have become! The great bond of my life is rent asunder! Rather would I have seen her lying dead there, before me, with her child upon her breast. O, what shall I do! (*Fiercely.*) Kill him! Kill him! In his bed!

[*Looks about him for a weapon; rises, and crossing the room takes down his gun;*

*goes to door of chamber, L., occupied by STRANGER; reverses the gun to beat in the door; as he holds it in the air, Cricket chirps loudly, and the fire flashes up. He recoils, lowers the gun, puts it aside, returns to his place by the fire, sits down, and bursts into tears. Music. The Cricket, in fairy shape, comes out and stajds, L. C.**

Fairy. (*Slowly and softly.*) I love it for the many times I have heard it, and the many thoughts its harmless music has given me.

John. (R.) She said so! True!

Fairy. This has been a happy home, John, and I love the Cricket for its sake!

John. It has been, Heaven knows! She made it happy, always, — until now. (*Sobs.*)

Fairy. So sweet-tempered; so domestic, joyful, busy, and light-hearted!

John. Otherwise I never could have loved her as I did.

Fairy. As you do!

John. (*Hesitatingly.*) As I did.

Fairy. Upon your own hearth —

John. The hearth she has blighted.

Fairy. The hearth she has — how often! — blessed and brightened; the hearth which, but for her, were only a few stones and bricks and rusty bars, but which

* The appearance of the Fairy, though adding much to the effectiveness of the Scene, may be dispensed with, and the whole, as far as "Enter TACKLETON," made a soliloquy.

has been, through her, the altar of your home; on which you have nightly sacrificed some petty passion, selfishness, or care, and offered up the homage of a tranquil mind, a trusting nature, and an overflowing heart. Upon your own hearth; in its quiet sanctuary, surrounded by its gentle influences and associations, hear her! Hear me! Hear everything that speaks the language of your hearth and home!

John. And pleads for her!

Fairy. All things that speak the language of your hearth and home, *must* plead for her! For they speak the truth.

[*A knock at door, c. Fairy vanishes, l. u. e.*

Enter, c. d., TACKLETON, dressed for his wedding. He comes down to c.

Tac. John Peerybingle! My good fellow, how do you find yourself this morning?

John. (*Shaking his head.*) I have had but a poor night, Master Tackleton, for I have been a good deal disturbed in my mind. But it's over now! Can you spare me half an hour or so, for some private talk?

Tac. I came on purpose.

Enter, l. u. e., TILLY. She goes to door, l., and knocks; looks in at the keyhole; knocks again, very loud.

John. (R.) You're not married before noon, I think?

Tac. (C.) No. Plenty of time. Plenty of time.

[*TILLY knocks again and shakes the door.*

Tilly. (*Looking around.*) If you please, I can't

make nobody hear. I hope nobody ain't gone, and been and died, if you please! (*Kicks the door.*)

Tac. Shall I go? It's curious. (*JOHN nods assent. TACKLETON goes to the door, knocks, kicks, and at last opens it; looks in, goes in and comes out hurriedly. Goes to JOHN, and speaks in his ear. Exit TILLY, L. U. E.*) John Peerybingle, I hope there has been nothing — nothing rash in the night? (*JOHN turns quickly to him.*) Because he's gone! And the window's open. I don't see any marks — to be sure, it's almost on a level with the garden; but I was afraid there might have been some — some scuffle, eh?

John. Make yourself easy. He went into that room last night, without harm in word or deed from me, and no one has entered it since. He is away of his own free will. I'd go out gladly at that door, and beg my bread from house to house, for life, if I could so change the past that he had never come. But he has come and gone, and I have done with him. (*DOT enters softly, L. U. E., and stands at back.*)

Tac. (*Taking a chair, c.*) O! — Well, I think he has got off pretty easy.

John. (*Covering his face with his hand, and speaking slowly.*) You showed me, last night, my wife; my wife that I love; secretly —

Tac. And tenderly —

John. Conniving at that man's disguise, and giving him opportunities of meeting her alone. I think there's no sight I wouldn't have rather seen than that. I think there's no man in the world I wouldn't have rather had to show it me.

Tac. I confess to having had my suspicions always. And that has made me objectionable here, I know.

John. But as you did show it me, and as you saw her, my wife, my wife that I love, — as you saw her at this disadvantage, it is right and just that you should also see with my eyes, and look into my breast, and know what my mind is upon the subject. For it's settled. And nothing can shake it now.

Tac. To be sure, it is necessary to vindicate —

John. (*Interrupting him.*) I am a plain, rough man, with very little to recommend me. I am not a clever man, as you very well know. I am not a young man. I loved my little Dot, because I had seen her grow up, from a child, in her father's house; because I knew how precious she was; because she has been my life, for years and years. There's many a man I can't compare with, who never could have loved my little Dot like me, I think. (*Pause.*) I often thought that though I wasn't good enough for her, I should make her a kind husband, and perhaps know her value better than another; and in this way I reconciled it to myself, and came to think it might be possible that we should be married. And, in the end, it came about, and we *were* married!

Tac. Hah!

John. I had studied myself. I knew how much I loved her, and how happy I should be. But I had not — I feel it now — sufficiently considered *her*.

Tac. To be sure. Giddiness, frivolity, fickleness, love of admiration! not considered! All left out of sight! Hah!

John. (*Sternly.*) You had best not interrupt me, till you understand me; and you're wide of doing

so. If, yesterday, I'd have struck that man down at a blow, who dared to breathe a word against her, to-day I'd set my foot upon his face, if he was my brother! (*TACKLETON looks astonished. JOHN continues more calmly.*) Did I consider that I took her — at her age and with her beauty — from her young companions, and the many scenes of which she was the ornament; in which she was the brightest star that ever shone; to shut her up from day to day in my dull house to keep my tedious company? Did I consider that it was no merit in me that I loved her, when everybody must, who knew her? Never! I took advantage of her hopeful nature, and her cheerful disposition, and I married her. I wish I never had! For her sake, not for mine! Heaven bless her for the cheerful constancy with which she has tried to keep the knowledge of this from me! And Heaven help me that, in my slow mind, I have not found it out before! Poor child! Poor Dot! That I could ever hope she would be fond of me! That I could ever believe she was!

Tac. She made such a show of it that, to tell you the truth, it was the origin of my misgivings.

John. She has tried — I only now begin to know how hard — to be my dutiful and zealous wife. How good she has been; how much she has done; how brave and strong a heart she has, let the happiness I have known under this roof bear witness! It will be some help and comfort to me, when I am here alone.

Tac. Here alone? O! Then you *do* mean to take some notice of this?

John. I mean to do her the greatest kindness, and

make her the best reparation, in my power. I can release her from the daily pain of an unequal marriage, and the struggle to conceal it. She shall be as free as I can render her.

Tac. Make *her* reparation! There must be something wrong here. You didn't say that, of course.

John. (*Seizing TACKLETON by the collar and shaking him.*) Listen to me! And take care that you hear me right. Listen to me. Do I speak plainly? (*JOHN and TACKLETON, centre, both standing.*)

Tac. Very plainly, indeed.

John. As if I meant it?

Tac. Very much as if you meant it.

John. I sat upon that hearth last night, all night; on the spot where she has often sat beside me, with her sweet face looking into mine. I called up her whole life, day by day. I had her dear self, in its every passage, in review before me. And upon my soul she is innocent, if there is One to judge the innocent and the guilty! Passion and distrust have left me, and nothing but my grief remains. In an unhappy moment, some old lover, better suited to her tastes and years than I, returned. In an unhappy moment, taken by surprise, she made herself a party to his treachery, by concealing it. Last night she saw him, in the interview we witnessed. It was wrong. But otherwise than this, she is innocent if there is truth on earth!

Tac. If that is your opinion —

John. So, let her go! Go, with my blessing for the many happy hours she has given me, and my forgiveness for any pang she has caused me. Let her go, and have the peace of mind I wish her! She'll never

hate me. She'll learn to like me better when I'm not a drag upon her. This is the day on which I took her from her home. To-day she shall return to it, and I will trouble her no more. Her father and mother will be here to-day, — we had made a little plan for keeping it together, — and they shall take her home. I can trust her there, or anywhere. She leaves me without blame, and she will live so, I am sure. If I should die, — I may, perhaps, while she is still young; I have lost some courage in a few hours, — she'll find that I remembered her, and loved her to the last. This is the end of what you showed me. Now it's over!

Dot. (*Clasping her hands, without coming forward.*) O, no, John, not over! Do not say it's over yet! Not quite yet. I have heard your noble words. I could not steal away, pretending to be ignorant of what has affected me with such deep gratitude. Do not say it's over, till the clock has struck again!

John. No hand can make the clock which will strike again for me the hours that are gone. But let it be so, if you will, my dear. It will strike soon. I'd try to please you in a harder case than that.

Tac. Well! I must be off, for when the clock strikes again, it'll be necessary for me to be upon my way to church. Good morning, John Peerybingle. (*Dot sits, weeping, at back, R. TILLY brings in baby, L. U. E., and walks up and down with it.*) I'm sorry to be deprived of the pleasure of your company. Sorry for the loss, and the occasion of it too!

John. (*Accompanying him to door, c.*) I have spoken plainly?

Tac. O, quite!

John. And you'll remember what I have said?

Tac. (*Stepping out.*) Why, if you compel me to make the observation, I must say that it was so very unexpected, that I am far from being likely to forget it.

John. The better for us both. Good-by! I give you joy!

Tac. I wish I could give it to *you*. As I can't, thank'ee. Between ourselves, I don't much think I shall have the less joy in my married life, because May hasn't been too officious about me, and too demonstrative. Good-by! Take care of yourself.

[*Exit TACKLETON.* JOHN stands at open door, c., looking after him. DOT, R., continues to sob hysterically. TILLY walks up and down the stage, L., "hushing" the baby.

Tilly. (*Stopping at L.*) Ow if you please don't! It's enough to dead and bury the baby so it is if you please.

Dot. (*Drying her eyes.*) Will you bring him, sometimes, to see his father, Tilly, when I can't live here, and have gone to my old home?

Tilly. (*Throwing back her head and bursting into a howl.*) Ow if you please don't! Ow if you please don't! Ow, what has everybody gone and been and done with everybody, making everybody else so wretched? Ow-w-w-w!

[DOT, R. seated; TILLY, L., with baby;
JOHN, C. D., looking out of the door.
*Curtain.**

* The Scene may close here, or may continue with the entrance of CALEB and BERTHA. In the latter case, JOHN will go off, C. D., immediately after TACKLETON.

"SIGHT RESTORED."*

SCENE, the same; DOT *seated, R., sobbing hysterically.* TILLY, L., *with baby in her arms, looking at DOT.*

Tilly. Ow if you please don't! It's enough to dead and bury the baby so it is if you please!

Dot. (*Drying her eyes.*) Will you bring him sometimes, to see his father, Tilly, when I can't live here, and have gone to my old home?

Tilly. (*Bursting into a howl.*) Ow if you please don't! Ow if you please don't! Ow, what has everybody been and gone and done with everybody, making everybody else so wretched? Ow-w-w-w!

Enter CALEB, leading BERTHA. TILLY breaks off her "howl," and stares at them.

Bertha. (L.) Mary, not at the marriage?

Caleb. (R. *Near DOT; whispering.*) I told her you wouldn't be there, mum. I heard as much last night. But, bless you, (*Takes her hands in his,*) I don't care for what they say. I don't believe them. There ain't much of me, but that little should be torn to pieces, sooner than I'd trust a word against you!

* If this Scene is to follow the last without an intermission, it should commence at "Enter CALEB," and John should go off (in the last Scene) immediately after TACKLETON; otherwise, the last Scene should end at "Exit TACKLETON," and this one begin with TILLY, as above.

(*Embraces her.*) Bertha couldn't stay at home this morning. She was afraid, I know, to hear the bells ring, and couldn't trust herself to be so near them on their wedding day. So we started in good time, and came here. (*A pause.*) I have been thinking of what I have done. I have been blaming myself, till I hardly know what to do, or where to turn, for the distress of mind I have caused her. And I've come to the conclusion that I'd better, if you'll stay with me, mum, the while, tell her the truth. You'll stay with me the while? I— (*Tremblingly.*) I don't know what effect it may have upon her. I don't know what she'll think of me. I don't know that she'll ever care for her poor father afterwards. But it's best for her that she should be undeceived, and I must bear the consequences, as I deserve!

Ber. (*Crossing to R.*) Mary, where is your hand? Ah! Here it is; here it is! (*Kisses it and draws it through her arm.*) I heard them speaking softly among themselves last night, of some blame against you. They were wrong. (*CALEB crosses to L.*)

Caleb. They were wrong.

Ber. I knew it. I told them so. I scorned to hear a word! Blame her with justice! No! I am not so blind as that. I know you all better than you think. But none so well as her. Not even you, father. There is nothing half so real and so true about me, as she is. If I could be restored to sight this instant, and not a word were spoken, I could choose her from a crowd! My sister!

Caleb. Come here, Bertha, my dear! I have something on my mind I want to tell you, while we three

are alone. Hear me kindly! I have a confession to make to you, my darling.

Ber. (*Going to him.*) A confession, father?

Caleb. (L. C.) I have wandered from the truth and lost myself, my child. I have wandered from the truth, intending to be kind to you; and have been cruel.

Ber. Cruel!

Dot. (R.) He accuses himself too strongly, Bertha. You'll say so, presently. You'll be the first to tell him so.

Ber. He cruel to me?

Caleb. Not meaning it, my child. But I have been, though I never suspected it till yesterday. My dear blind daughter, hear me and forgive me. The world you live in, heart of mine, doesn't exist as I have represented it. The eyes you have trusted in have been false to you. (*BERTHA draws away from him.*) Your road in life was rough, my poor one, and I meant to smooth it for you. I have altered objects, changed the characters of people, invented many things that never have been, to make you happier. I have had concealments from you; put deceptions on you, God forgive me! and surrounded you with fancies.

Ber. (*Hurriedly, and drawing farther from him.*) But living people are not fancies! You can't change them.

Caleb. I have done so, Bertha. There is one person that you know, my dove —

Ber. (*Reproachfully.*) O, father! Why do you say I know? What and whom do I know! I, who have no leader! I, so miserably blind! (*Covers her face with her hands.*)

Caleb. The marriage that takes place to-day, is with a stern, sordid, grinding man. A hard master to you and me, my dear, for many years. Ugly in his looks, and in his nature. Cold and callous, always. Unlike what I have painted him to you in everything, my child. In everything.

Ber. O, why — why did you ever do this! Why did you ever fill my heart so full, and then come in like Death, and tear away the objects of my love! O Heaven, how blind I am! How helpless and alone! (*Sinks on the floor, c., and weeps.* *CALEB hangs his head in silence; Cricket chirps softly; BERTHA raises her head.*) Mary, tell me what my home is, — what it truly is.

Dot. It is a poor place, Bertha; very poor and bare, indeed. The house will scarcely keep out wind and rain another winter. (*BERTHA rises and goes to DOT.*) It is as roughly shielded from the weather, Bertha, as your poor father in his sackcloth coat. (*CALEB sits, l., with his arm on the back of the chair, and his head on his arm.*)

Ber. (*Leading DOT up the stage.*) Those presents that I took such care of, — that came almost at my wish, and were so dearly welcome to me, — where did they come from? Did you send them? (*DOT and BERTHA stand at back, c.*)

Dot. No.

Ber. Who then? (*DOT is silent. BERTHA hides her face on DOT's shoulder.*) Dear Mary, a moment — one moment. Move this way. Speak softly to me. You are true, I know. You'd not deceive me now — would you?

Dot. (*Embracing her.*) No, Bertha, indeed!

Ber. No, I'm sure you would not. You have too much pity for me. Mary, look across the room to where we were just now, — to where my father is, — my father, so compassionate and loving to me — and tell me what you see.

Dot. I see an old man sitting in a chair, and leaning sorrowfully on the back, with his face resting on his hand; as if his child should comfort him, Bertha.

Ber. Yes, yes. She will. Go on.

Dot. He is an old man, worn with care and work. He is a spare, dejected, thoughtful, gray-haired man. I see him now, despondent and bowed down, and striving against nothing. But, Bertha, I have seen him many times before, and striving hard in many ways for one great, sacred object. And I honor his gray head, and bless him.

Ber. (*Breaking away, and throwing herself on her knees before CALEB, L.*) It is my sight restored. It is my sight! I have been blind, and now my eyes are open. I never knew him. To think I might have died, and never truly seen the father who has been so loving to me! (*CALEB much moved.*) There is not a gallant figure on this earth that I would love so dearly, and would cherish so devotedly as this! The grayer, and more worn, the dearer, father! Never let them say I am blind again. There's not a furrow in his face, there's not a hair upon his head, that shall be forgotten in my prayers and thanks to Heaven! (*Throws her arms about him.*)

Caleb. (*Embracing her.*) My Bertha!

Ber. (*Caressing him, and weeping.*) And in my blindness, I believed him to be so different! And having him beside me, day by day, so mindful of me always, never dreamed of this!

Caleb. The fresh, smart father in the blue coat, Bertha — he's gone!

Ber. Nothing is gone. Dearest father, no. Everything is here — in you. The father that I loved so well; the father that I never loved enough, and never knew; the benefactor whom I first began to reverence and love, because he had such sympathy for me; all are here in you. Nothing is dead to me. The soul of all that was most dear to me is here — here, with the worn face, and the gray head. And I am *not* blind, father, any longer!

[*Tableau.* CALEB and BERTHA, L. C., DOT,
R. C.; *Curtain.*

“MY BOY FROM THE GOLDEN SOUTH AMERICAS.”

SCENE, the same; CALEB, *seated* by BERTHA, L. C.
DOT, *seated*, R. C.

Bertha. (*Hesitating.*) Father — Mary!

Caleb. Yes, my dear. Here she is.

Ber. There is no change in *her*? You never told me anything of *her* that was not true?

Caleb. I should have done it, my dear, I am afraid, if I could have made her better than she was. But I must have changed her for the worse, if I had changed her at all. Nothing could improve her, Bertha. (BERTHA *embraces* DOT.)

Dot. More changes than you think for, may happen, though, my dear. Changes for the better, I mean. Changes for great joy to some of us. You mustn't let them startle you too much if any such should ever happen, and affect you! Are those wheels upon the road? You've a quick ear, Bertha. Are they wheels? (*Rises, and clings tremblingly to back of her chair, looking up the stage.*)

Ber. Yes, coming very fast.

Dot. (*Panting with excitement.*) I—I—I know you have a quick ear, because I have noticed it often, and because you were so quick to find out that strange step last night. They are wheels, indeed! Coming nearer! Nearer! (*Excitedly.*) Very close! and now you hear them stopping at the garden gate! And now you hear a step outside the door — the same step, Bertha — is it not? — and now — (*Gives a loud cry,*

and running to CALEB, L. C., covers his eyes with her hand. A young man (EDWARD) rushes in, C. D., and, throwing his hat in the air, comes down towards them.) Is it over?

Edward. (R. C.) Yes!

Dot. Happily over?

Edw. Yes.

Dot. Do you recollect the voice, dear Caleb? Did you ever hear the like of it before?

Caleb. (*Trembling.*) If my boy in the Golden South Americas, was alive—

Dot. (*Removing her hands, and clapping them.*) He *is* alive! Look at him! See where he stands before you, healthy and strong! Your own dear son! Your own dear, living, loving brother, Bertha! (*They embrace one another.*)

Clock strikes twelve. Enter JOHN, C. D. He starts back.

Caleb. Look, John! Look here! My own boy, from the Golden South Americas! My own son! Him that you fitted out, and sent away yourself. Him that you were always such a friend to.

John. (*Advancing towards him, with extended hands, c., then recoiling.*) Edward! Was it you?

Dot. (L.) Now tell him all! Tell him all, Edward; and don't spare me, for nothing shall make me spare myself in his eyes, ever again.

Edw. (L. C.) I was the man.

John. (R. C.) And could you steal, disguised, into the house of your old friend? There was a frank boy once—how many years is it, Caleb, since we heard

that he was dead, and had it proved, we thought—who never would have done that.

Edw. There was a generous friend of mine once; more a father to me than a friend, who never would have judged me, or any other man, unheard. You were he. So I am certain you will hear me now.

John. (R.) Well, that's but fair. I will.

Edw. You must know that when I left here, a boy, I was in love, and my love was returned. She was a very young girl, who, perhaps (you may tell me), did not know her own mind. But I knew mine, and I had a passion for her.

John. You had! You!

Edw. Indeed I had. And she returned it. I have ever since believed she did, and now I am sure she did.

John. Heaven help me! This is worse than all.

Edw. Constant to her, and returning, full of hope, after many hardships and perils, to redeem my part of our old contract, I heard, twenty miles away, that she was false to me; that she had forgotten me, and had bestowed herself upon another, and a richer man. I had no mind to reproach her, but I wished to see her, and to prove beyond dispute that this was true. That I might have the truth, the real truth, observing freely for myself, I dressed myself unlike myself,—you know how,—and waited on the road—you know where. You had no suspicion of me; neither had—had she (*Points to Dot*), until I whispered in her ear at that fireside, and she so nearly betrayed me.

Dot. (L.) (*Sobbing.*) But when she knew that Edward was alive, and had come back, and when she knew his purpose, she advised him, by all means, to

keep his secret close ; for his old friend, John Peerybingle, was much too open in his nature, and too clumsy in all artifice — being a clumsy man in general, — to keep it for him. And when she, — that's me, John, — told him all, and how his sweetheart had believed him to be dead ; and how she had been at last over-persuaded by her mother into a marriage which the silly, dear old thing called advantageous ; and when she — that's me, again, John, — told him they were not yet married, and that it would be nothing but a sacrifice if it went on, for there was no love on her side ; and when he went nearly mad with joy to hear it, then she — that's me again — said she could go between them, and would sound his sweetheart and be sure that what she — me again, John, — said and thought was right. And it *was* right, John ! And they were brought together, John. And they were married, John, an hour ago ! And

Enter, C. D., MAY FIELDING, with her mother ; they stand at back, C.

here's the bride ! And Gruff and Tackleton may die a bachelor ! And I'm a happy little woman, May, God bless you. (*Runs to MAY, C., up the stage, and embraces her ! JOHN is rushing towards her, but she stops him and retreats to L.*) No, John, no ! Hear all ! It was wrong to have a secret from you. I'm very sorry. I didn't think it any harm. But when I knew that you had seen me walking in the gallery with Edward, and when I knew what you thought, I felt how giddy and how wrong it was. But, oh, dear John, how could you, could you think so ! Not yet, John,

not yet! When I was sad about this intended marriage, it was because I remembered May and Edward such young lovers; and knew that her heart was far away from Tackleton. You believe that now, don't you, John? No; keep there, please, John! When I laugh at you, John, as I sometimes do, and call you clumsy, and a dear old goose, and names of that sort, it's because I love you, John, so well, and take such pleasure in your ways, and wouldn't see you altered in the least respect to have you made a king to-morrow.

Caleb. Hooroar! My opinion!

Dot. Not yet, John; another minute or two, if you please, John. What I want most to tell you, I have kept to the last. My dear, good, generous John, when we were talking the other night about the Cricket, I had it on my lips to say that, at first, I did not love you quite as dearly as I do now; but, dear John, every day and every hour, I loved you more and more. And if I could have loved you better than I do, the noble words I heard you say this morning would have made me. (*JOHN advances slowly across the stage.*) But I can't. All the affection that I had (it was a great deal, John), I gave you long, long ago, and I have no more left to give. Now, my dear husband, take me to your heart again! That's my home, John; and never, never think of sending me to any other!

[*Throws herself into his arms, c. All join in congratulations. Cricket chirps. Noise without.**

* JOHN and DOT, c.; EDWARD and MAY, l. c.; MRS. FIELDING and BERTHA, r. c.; CALEB up the stage, l. u. e.; TILLY up the stage, r.

Caleb. (*Looking out of window, left of C. D.*)
Gruff and Tackleton coming back.

Enter TACKLETON, C. D.; stops, C.

Tac. Why, what's this, John Peerybingle! There's some mistake. I appointed Mrs. Tackleton to meet me at the church, and I'll swear I passed her on the road, on her way here. O! here she is! I beg your pardon, sir; I haven't the pleasure of knowing you; but if you can do me the favor to spare this young lady, she has rather a particular engagement this morning.

Edw. But I *can't* spare her. I couldn't think of it.

Tac. What do you mean, you vagabond?

Edw. I mean that I am as deaf to harsh discourse this morning, as I was to all discourse last night. (*TACKLETON looks at him and starts. EDWARD holds out MAY'S left hand.*) I am sorry, sir, that the young lady can't accompany you to church; but as she has been there once, this morning, perhaps you'll excuse her.

[*TACKLETON looks at her, and takes from his pocket a piece of silver paper, containing a ring, which he gives to TILLY.*

Tac. Miss Slowboy, will you have the kindness to throw that in the fire? Thank'ee.

Edw. It was a previous engagement, quite an old engagement, that prevented my wife from keeping her appointment with you, I assure you.

Tac. O, certainly! O, to be sure! It's all right, it's quite correct. Mrs. Edward Plummer, I infer?

Edw. That's the name.

Tac. Ah! (*Looking closely at him.*) I shouldn't have known you, sir. I give you joy, sir.

Edw. Thank'ee.

Tac. Mrs. Peerybingle, I'm sorry. You haven't done me a very great kindness, but, upon my life, I am sorry. You understand me; that's enough. It's quite correct, ladies and gentlemen all, and perfectly satisfactory. Good morning! [*Exit, c. d.*]

[The Scene may end here, or may be continued by the addition of the following:]

[*The party make preparations for a grand dinner together, setting the table in centre of stage. During the preparations a tap at door, c. d., is heard. JOHN opens door; enter, man, with box on his head; he places box on table.*]

Man. Mr. Tackleton's compliments, and as he hasn't got no use for the cake himself, p'r'aps you'll eat it. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Fielding. I wouldn't touch it. It *must* be poisoned. I remember having heard of a cake that turned a whole seminary of young ladies blue.

May. O, no, mother! No fear of that. (*She cuts the cake, and offers it to the company.*)

Another tap. Enter same man, with a large bundle.

Man. Mr. Tackleton's compliments, and he's sent a few toys for the Babby. They ain't ugly. (*Exit. Tap again.*)

Enter TACKLETON, C. D.

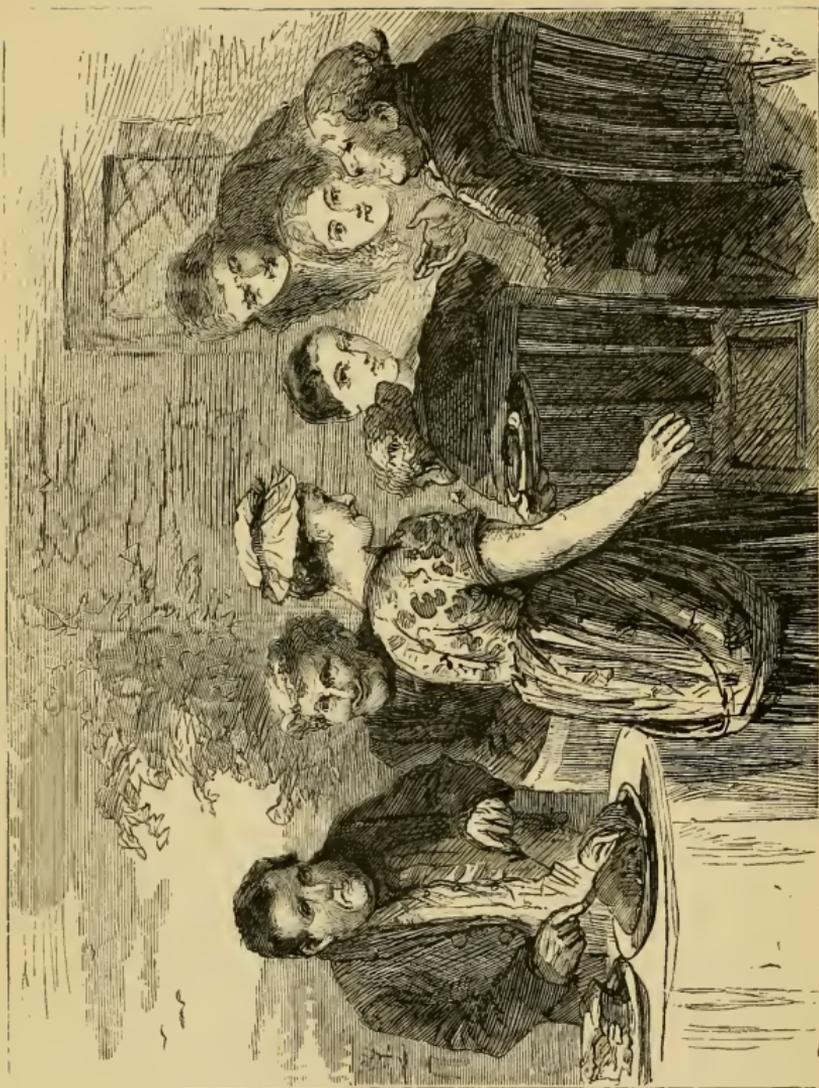
Tac. (*Taking off his hat.*) Mrs. Peerybingle! I'm sorry. I'm more sorry than I was this morning. I have had time to think of it. John Peerybingle! I am sour by disposition; but I can't help being sweetened, more or less, by coming face to face with such a man as you. Caleb! this unconscious little nurse gave me a broken hint last night, of which I have found the thread. I blush to think how easily I might have bound you and your daughter to me, and what a miserable idiot I was, when I took her for one. Friends, one and all, my house is very lonely to-night. I have not so much as a Cricket on my hearth. I have scared them all away. Be gracious to me; let me join this happy party!

[*Applause. Congratulations. Tableau. Cricket chirps merrily. Curtain.*

[This Scene may be still further extended by introducing the dancing and merry-making described in the original.]

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.





THE BREAKFAST.

From a design by S. EYTINGE, JR.

Engraved expressly for JAS. R. OSCOOD, & CO.'S Diamond Dickens.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

[For a description of characters and costumes, see Index, at the end of this volume.]

“ALL A FARCE.”

SCENE, DR. JEDDLER'S Orchard. *Across the back, a fence, with a gate, c. ; R., Porch of DR. JEDDLER'S house. L., Trees, &c.; Music, a harp and fiddle. GRACE and MARION dancing to the music. Enter, R., DR. JEDDLER. GRACE and MARION stand at gate, c.*

Dr. Jeddler. (Going towards c.) Music and dancing to-day! (Stopping and talking to himself.) I thought they dreaded to-day; but it's a world of contradictions. Why, Grace! why, Marion! Is the world more mad than usual this morning?

Marion. (Going to him and looking in his face.) Make some allowance for it, father, if it be, for it's somebody's birthday.

Dr. J. Somebody's birthday, Puss? Don't you know it's always somebody's birthday? Did you never hear how many new performers enter on this— ha, ha, ha! — it's impossible to speak gravely of it—

on this preposterous and ridiculous business called Life, every minute.

Marion. No, father!

Dr. F. No, not you, of course, — you're a woman, — almost. By-the-by, I suppose it's *your* birthday?

Mar. No! Do you really, father?

Dr. F. (*Kissing her.*) There! Take my love with it. And many happy returns of the — the idea! — of the day. (*Aside.*) The notion of wishing happy returns in such a farce as this, is good — Ha, ha, ha! Well, but how did you get the music? Poultry stealers, of course! Where did the minstrels come from?

Grace. (*Arranging the flowers in MARION'S hair.*) Alfred sent the music.

Dr. F. O, Alfred sent the music — did he?

Grace. Yes. He met it coming out of the town as he was entering, early. The men are travelling on foot, and rested there last night; and as it was Marion's birthday, and he thought it would please her, he sent them on, with a pencilled note to me, saying that if I thought so too, they had come to serenade her.

Dr. F. Ay, ay, he always takes your opinion.

Grace. And my opinion being favorable, and Marion being in high spirits, and beginning to dance, I joined her. And so we danced to Alfred's music till we were out of breath. And we thought the music all the gayer for being sent by Alfred — didn't we, Marion?

Mar. O, I don't know, Grace. How you tease me about Alfred!

Grace. Tease you by mentioning your lover?

Mar. I'm sure I don't much care to have him men-

tioned. (*Stripping some flowers and scattering the petals.*) I'm almost tired of hearing of him. And as to his being my lover —

Grace. Hush! Don't speak lightly of a true heart, which is all your own, Marion, even in jest. There's not a truer heart than Alfred's in the world!

Mar. No, perhaps not. But I don't know that there's great merit in that. I—I don't want him to be so very true. I never asked him. If he expects that I— But, dear Grace, why need we talk of him at all, just now?

Dr. F. Britain! Britain! Halloo!

Britain. (*Coming from the house, R.*) Now, then!

Dr. F. Where's the breakfast table?

Brit. In the house.

Dr. F. Are you going to spread it out here, as you were told last night? Don't you know that there are gentlemen coming? That this is a very particular occasion?

Brit. (R.) (*Very loud.*) I couldn't do anything, Doctor Jeddler, till the women had done getting in the apples—could I?

Dr. F. (*Looking at his watch.*) Well, have they done now? (*Exit BRITAIN, and returns with table.*) Come! (*clapping his hands*) come! Where's Clemency?

Newcome. (*Coming from trees, L.*) Here am I, Mister. It's all done, now. (*Speaking off, L.*) Clear away, gals! Everything shall be ready for you in half a minute, Mister! (*BRITAIN brings out table-furniture. NEWCOME lays the table at L., near trees.*) Here are them two lawyers a-coming, Mister.

Dr. F. (*Going towards gate, c.* MESSRS. SNITCHEY and CRAGGS enter at gate.) A-ha! Good morning! Good morning! Grace, my dear! Marion! Here are Messrs. Snitchey and Craggs. Where's Alfred?

Grace. (R.) He'll be back directly, father, no doubt. He had so much to do this morning, in his preparations for departure, that he was up and out by daybreak. Good morning, gentlemen!

Mr. Snitchey. (*Saluting.*) Ladies, for Self and Craggs, (CRAGGS bows,) good morning! Miss, (*To MARION, R.*.) I kiss your hand. (*Kisses it.*) And I wish you a hundred happy returns of this auspicious day.

Dr. F. (*Thoughtfully.*) Ha, ha, ha! The great farce, in a hundred acts!

Mr. S. You wouldn't, I am sure, cut the great farce short for this actress, at all events, Dr. Jeddler.

Dr. F. No, God forbid! May she live to laugh at it, as long as she *can* laugh, and then say, with the French wit, "The farce is ended; draw the curtain!"

Mr. S. (*Looking into his blue bag.*) The French wit was wrong, Dr. Jeddler, and your philosophy is altogether wrong — depend upon it, as I've often told you. Nothing serious in life! What do you call law?

Dr. F. A joke.

Mr. S. (*Looking up.*) Did you ever go to law?

Dr. F. Never!

Mr. S. If you ever do, perhaps you'll alter that opinion.

[*Puts his bag on the floor, against the leg of the table.*]

Craggs. It's made a great deal too easy

Dr. F. Law is?

Craggs. Yes, everything is. Everything appears to me to be made too easy, now-a-days. It's the vice of these times. If the world is a joke (I am not prepared to say it isn't), it ought to be made a very difficult joke to crack. It ought to be as hard a struggle, sir, as possible. That's the intention. But, it's being made far too easy. We are oiling the gates of life. They ought to be rusty. We shall have them beginning to turn, soon, with a smooth sound. Whereas they ought to grate upon their hinges, sir.

Enter, c., ALFRED, followed by a porter, with bundles. DR. JEDDLER, SNITCHEY, and CRAGGS advance to meet him.

Dr. F. Happy returns, Alf!

Mr. S. (*Bowing low.*) A hundred happy returns of this auspicious day, Mr. Heathfield!

Craggs. (*In a low tone.*) Returns!

Alfred. Why, what a battery! and one — two — three — all foreboders of no good, in the great sea before me. I am glad you are not the first I have met this morning; I should have taken it for a bad omen. But Grace was the first — sweet, pleasant Grace — so I defy you all!

New. (L.) If you please, Mister, *I* was the first you know. She was walking out here, before sunrise, you remember. I was in the house.

Alf. That's true! Clemency was the first. So I defy you with Clemency.

Mr. S. Ha, ha, ha! — for Self and Craggs. What a defiance!

Alf. (*Shaking hands with all.*) Not so bad a one as it appears, may be. (*Looks around.*) Where are the — (*Sees GRACE and MARION at R.*) Oh! (*Crosses to them and salutes them.*)

Dr. F. Come, come, friends! To breakfast!

[*They sit at table, L. C., GRACE at head; next ALFRED and MARION; opposite them SNITCHEY and CRAGGS; at foot, DR. JEDDLER; at back, L., at a small table, BRITAIN carves beef and ham. NEWCOME waits on table.*]

Brit. (*Approaching MR. S. with knife and fork in his hands.*) Meat?

Mr. S. Certainly.

Brit. (*To CRAGGS.*) Do you want any?

Craggs. Lean and well done.

[*BRITAIN serves both, and stationing himself behind, eyes them severely.*]

Dr. F. Now, Alfred, for a word or two of business while we are yet at breakfast.

Mr. S. and C. While we are yet at breakfast.

Alf. If you please, sir.

Dr. F. If anything could be serious, in such a —

Alf. Farce as this, sir.

Dr. F. In such a farce as this, it might be this recurrence, on the eve of separation, of a double birthday, which is connected with many associations pleasant to us four, and with the recollection of a long and amicable intercourse. That's not to the purpose.

Alf. Ah! yes, yes, Dr. Jeddler. It is to the pur-

pose. Much to the purpose, as my heart bears witness this morning; and as yours does too, I know, if you would let it speak. I leave your house to-day; I cease to be your ward to-day; we part with tender relations stretching far behind us, that never can be exactly renewed, and with others dawning yet before us (*he looks down at MARION*), fraught with such considerations as I must not trust myself to speak of now. Come, come! there's a serious grain in this large foolish dust-heap, Doctor. Let us allow to-day, that there is one. (MR. CRAGGS *chokes*.)

Brit. (*Grimly*.) I thought he was gone!

Dr. F. To-day! Hear him! Ha, ha, ha! Of all days in the foolish year. Why, on this day, the great battle was fought on this ground. On this ground where we now sit, where I saw my two girls dance this morning, where the fruit has just been gathered for our eating from these trees, the roots of which are struck in Men, not earth, — so many lives were lost, that within my recollection, generations afterwards, a church-yard full of bones, and dust of bones, and chips of cloven skulls, has been dug up from underneath our feet here. Yet not a hundred people in that battle knew for what they fought, or why; not a hundred of the inconsiderate rejoicers in the victory, why they rejoiced. Not half a hundred people were the better for the gain or loss. Not half a dozen men agree to this hour on the cause or merits, and nobody, in short, ever knew anything distinct about it, but the mourners of the slain. Serious, too! (*Laughing*.) Such a system!

Alf. But all this seems to me to be very serious.

Dr. F. Serious! If you allowed such things to be serious, you must go mad, or die, or climb up to the top of a mountain, and turn hermit.

Alf. Besides — so long ago.

Dr. F. Long ago! Do you know what the world has been doing, ever since! Do you know what else it has been doing? *I don't!*

Mr. S. (*Stirring his tea.*) It has gone to law a little.

Craggs. Although the way out has been always made too easy.

Mr. S. And you'll excuse my saying, Doctor, having been already put a thousand times in possession of my opinion, in the course of our discussions, that, in its having gone to law, and in its legal system altogether, I do observe a serious side — now, really, a something tangible, and with a purpose and intention in it —

[*NEWCOME falls against the table.*

Dr. F. Heyday! what's the matter there?

New. It's this evil-inclined blue bag, always tripping up somebody!

Mr. S. With a purpose and intention in it, I was saying, that commands respect. Life a farce, Doctor Jeddler? With law in it? (*Doctor laughs.*) Granted, if you please, that war is foolish. There we agree. For example: Here's a smiling country (*pointing it out with his fork*), once overrun by soldiers — trespassers every man of 'em, — and laid waste by fire and sword. He, he, he! The idea of any man exposing himself, voluntarily, to fire and sword! *Stupid, wasteful, positively ridiculous; you laugh at your

fellow-creatures, you know, when you think of it! But take this smiling country as it stands. Think of the laws appertaining to real property; to the bequest and devise of real property; to the mortgage and redemption of real property; to leasehold, freehold, and copyhold estate; think of the complicated laws relating to title and proof of title, with all the contradictory precedents and numerous acts of Parliament connected with them; think of the infinite number of ingenious and interminable chancery suits, to which this pleasant prospect may give rise; and acknowledge, Dr. Jeddler, that there is a green spot in the scheme about us! I believe (*looking at his partner*), that I speak for Self and Craggs? (CRAGGS *nods*.) A little more beef, if you please, Britain. I don't stand up for life in general; it's full of folly; full of something worse. Professions of trust, and confidence, and unselfishness, and all that! Bah, bah, bah! We see what they're worth. But you mustn't laugh at life; you've got a game to play; a very serious game, indeed! Everybody's playing against you, you know, and you're playing against them. O! it's a very interesting thing. There are deep moves upon the board. You must only laugh, Dr. Jeddler, when you win—and then not much. He, he, he! And then not much. (*Winks at Doctor.*)

Dr. J. Well, Alfred! what do you say now?

Alf. I say, sir, that the greatest favor you could do me, and yourself too, I am inclined to think, would be to try sometimes to forget this battle-field, and others like it, in that broader battle-field of Life, on which the sun looks every day. .

Mr. S. Really, I'm afraid that wouldn't soften his opinions, Mr. Alfred. The combatants are very eager and very bitter in that same battle of Life. There's a great deal of cutting and slashing, and firing into people's heads from behind. There is terrible treading down, and trampling on. It is rather a bad business.

Alf. I believe, Mr. Snitchey, there are quiet victories and struggles, great sacrifices of self, and noble acts of heroism, in it — even in many of its apparent lightnesses and contradictions — not the less difficult to achieve, because they have no earthy chronicle or audience — done every day in nooks and corners, and in little households, and in men's and women's hearts — any one of which might reconcile the sternest man to such a world, and fill him with belief and hope in it, though two fourths of its people were at war, and another fourth at law; and that's a bold word. (*GRACE and MARION listen intently.*)

Dr. F. Well, well! I'm too old to be converted, even by my friend Snitchey, here, or my good spinster sister, Martha Jeddler; who had what she calls her domestic trials, ages ago, and has led a sympathizing life with all sorts of people ever since; and who is so much of your opinion (only she's less reasonable and more obstinate, being a woman) that we can't agree, and seldom meet. I was born upon this battle-field. I began, as a boy, to have my thoughts directed to the real history of a battle-field. Sixty years have gone over my head, and I have never seen the Christian world, including Heaven knows how many loving mothers and good enough girls, like mine here, any-

thing but mad for a battle-field. The same contradictions prevail in everything. One must either laugh or cry at such stupendous inconsistencies; and I prefer to laugh. (*BRITAIN chuckles.*)

New. (*Nudging him with her elbow.*) What are you laughing at?

Brit. Not you!

New. Who, then?

Brit. Humanity! That's the joke!

New. (*Aside.*) What between master and them lawyers, he's getting more and more addle-headed every day. (*Nudging him again.*) Do you know where you are? Do you want to get warning?

Brit. (*Looking immovably before him.*) I don't know anything. I don't care for anything. I don't make out anything. I don't believe anything. And I don't want anything.

Dr. F. But this is not our business, Alfred. Ceasing to be my ward (as you have said) to-day, and leaving us full to the brim of such learning as the Grammar School down here was able to give you, and your studies in London could add to that, and such practical knowledge as a dull old country Doctor, like myself, could graft upon both; you are away, now, into the world. The first term of probation appointed by your poor father being over, away you go now, your own master, to fulfil his second desire. And long before your three years' tour among the foreign schools of medicine is finished, you'll have forgotten us. Lord, you'll forget us easily in six months!

Alf. (*Laughing.*) If I do — But you know better; why should I speak to you!

Dr. F. I don't know anything of the sort. What do you say, Marion? (*MARION plays with her cup, without replying.*) I haven't been, I hope, a very unjust steward in the execution of my trust; but I am to be, at any rate, formally discharged, and released, and what not, this morning; and here are our good friends, Snitchey and Craggs, with a bagful of papers, and accounts, and documents, for the transfer of the balance of the trust-fund to you (I wish it was a more difficult one to dispose of, Alfred, but you must get to be a great man, and make it so), and other drolleries of that sort, which are to be signed, sealed, and delivered.

Mr. S. (*Pushing back his cup and taking out his papers.*) And duly witnessed as by law required; and Self and Craggs having been co-trustees with you, Doctor, in so far as the funds was concerned, we shall want your two servants to attest the signatures — can you read, Mrs. Newcome?

New. (*Behind GRACE.*) I ain't married, Mister.

Mr. S. O, I beg your pardon. (*Aside.*) I should think not. (*Looking at NEWCOME.*) You *can* read?

New. A little.

Mr. S. The marriage service, night and morning, eh?

New. No. Too hard. I only reads a thimble.

Mr. S. Read a thimble! What are you talking about, young woman?

New. (*Nodding.*) And a nutmeg-grater.

Mr. S. (*Starting at her.*) Why, this is a lunatic! a subject for the Lord High Chancellor!

Craggs. If possessed of any property!

[NEWCOME plunges into her pocket, and drawing out, one after another, a handkerchief, a candle end, an apple, an orange, needle-case, &c., all of which she gives to BRITAIN to hold, fishes out her thimble.

Grace. (*Laughing.*) Clemency's thimble and nutmeg-grater have each an engraved motto. They form her pocket library, for she is not much given to books.

Mr. S. O, that's it, is it, Miss Grace? Yes, yes! Ha, ha, ha! (*Aside.*) I thought our friend was an idiot. She looks uncommonly like it. (*To NEWCOME.*) And what does the thimble say, Mrs. Newcome?

New. I ain't married, Mister.

Mr. S. Well, Newcome. Will that do? What does the thimble say, Newcome?

[NEWCOME holds up the thimble on her fore finger.

Mr. S. That's the thimble, is it, young woman? And what does the thimble say?

New. (*Reading slowly round it.*) It says, "For-get and for-give." (*SNITCHEY and CRAGGS laugh heartily.*)

Mr. S. So new!

Craggs. So easy!

Mr. S. Such a knowledge of human nature in it!

Craggs. So applicable to the affairs of life!

Mr. S. (*To NEWCOME.*) And the nutmeg-grater?

New. The grater says, "Do as you — wold — be — done by."

Mr. S. Do, or you'll be done brown, you mean.

New. (*Shaking her head.*) I don't understand! I ain't no lawyer.

Mr. S. I am afraid that if she was, Doctor, she'd find it to be the golden rule of half her clients. They are serious enough in that, — whimsical as your world is, — and lay the blame on us afterwards. We, in our profession, are little else than mirrors, after all, Mr. Alfred; but we are generally consulted by angry and quarrelsome people, who are not in their best looks, and it's rather hard to quarrel with us if we reflect unpleasant aspects. I think that I speak for Self and Craggs?

Craggs. Decidedly.

Mr. S. (*Returning to his papers.*) And so, if Mr. Britain will oblige us with a mouthful of ink, we'll sign, seal, and deliver as soon as possible, or the coach will be coming past before we know where we are.

[*BRITAIN does not move; NEWCOME gets the ink; nudges BRITAIN as she passes him. He rouses himself. Papers are brought out, signed by BRITAIN and NEWCOME, and put into the blue bag again.*

Dr. F. Britain! Run to the gate and watch for the coach. (*BRITAIN goes to gate.*) Time flies, Alfred.

Alf. Yes, sir, yes. Dear Grace, a moment! Marion — so young and beautiful, so winning, and so much admired, dear to my heart as nothing else in life is — remember! I leave Marion to you! (*MARION stands apart.*)

Grace. She has always been a sacred charge to

me, Alfred. She is doubly so, now. I will be faithful to my trust, believe me.

Alf. I do believe it, Grace. I know it well. Who could look upon your face, and hear your voice, and not know it! Ah, Grace! If I had your well-governed heart and tranquil mind, how bravely I would leave this place to-day!

Grace. (*Smiling.*) Would you?

Alf. And yet, Grace — Sister, seems the natural word.

Grace. (*Quickly.*) Use it! I am glad to hear it. Call me nothing else.

Alf. And yet, sister, then, Marion and I had better have your true and steadfast qualities serving us here, and making us both happier and better. I wouldn't carry them away, to sustain myself, if I could!

Brit. Coach upon the hill-top!

Dr. F. Time flies, Alfred. (*ALFRED leads MARION to her sister.*)

Alf. I have been telling Grace, dear Marion, that you are her charge; my precious trust at parting. And when I come back and reclaim you, dearest, and the bright prospect of our married life lies stretched before us, it shall be one of our chief pleasures to consult how we can make Grace happy; how we can anticipate her wishes; how we can show our gratitude and love to her; how we can return her something of the debt she will have heaped upon us. And when the time comes, — as it must one day — I wonder it has never come yet, but Grace knows best, for Grace is always right — when *she* will want a friend to open her whole heart to, and to be to her something of what

she has been to us, — then, Marion, how faithful we will prove, and what delight to us to know that she, our dear good sister, loves and is loved again, as we would have her! And when all that is past, and we are old, and living (as we must!) together, — close together — talking often of old times — these shall be our favorite times among them — this day most of all; and, telling each other what we thought and felt, and hoped and feared, at parting; and how we couldn't bear to say good-by —

Brit. Coach coming through the wood!

Alf. Yes! I am ready — and how we met again, so happily, in spite of all; we'll make this day the happiest in all the year, and keep it as a treble birthday. Shall we, dear?

Grace. (*Eagerly.*) Yes! Yes! Alfred, don't linger. There's no time. Say good-by to Marion. And Heaven be with you! (*ALFRED embraces MARION.*)

Dr. F. Farewell, my boy! To talk about any serious correspondence or serious affections, and engagements, and so forth, in such a — ha, ha, ha! — you know what I mean, — why that, of course, would be sheer nonsense. All I can say is, that if you and Marion should continue in the same foolish minds, I shall not object to have you for a son-in-law one of these days.

Brit. Over the bridge!

Alf. (*Shaking DR. JEDDLER'S hand.*) Let it come! Think of me sometimes, my old friend and guardian, as seriously as you can! Adieu, Mr. Snitchey! Farewell, Mr. Craggs!

Brit. Coming down the road!

Alf. A kiss of Clemency Newcome, for long acquaintance' sake! Shake hands, Britain! Marion, dearest heart, good-by! Sister Grace! remember!

[*Exit.* GRACE *looks after him.* MARION *looks away.*

Grace. He waves his hat to you, my love. Your chosen husband, darling. Look!

[MARION *turns and looks a moment, then falls on GRACE'S neck.*

Mar. (*Sobbing.*) O, Grace! God bless you! But I cannot bear to see it, Grace! It breaks my heart.

“SNITCHEY AND CRAGGS.”

SCENE: A Law Office. MESSRS. SNITCHEY and CRAGGS seated at opposite sides of a desk. MR. WARDEN in an arm-chair near them. On the table, numerous law papers, a box from which they have been taken, and two lighted candles.

Snitchey. (Taking up a paper.) That's all. Really there's no other resource. No other resource.

Warden. All lost, spent, wasted, pawned, borrowed, and sold, eh?

Snit. All.

War. Nothing else to be done, you say?

Snit. Nothing at all.

War. (After reflection.) And I am not even personally safe in England? You hold to that, do you?

Snit. In no part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

War. A mere prodigal son, with no father to go back to, no swine to keep, and no husks to share with them? Eh? (MR. SNITCHEY coughs.) Ruined at thirty! Humph!

Snit. Not ruined, Mr. Warden. Not so bad as that. You have done a good deal towards it, I must say, but you are not ruined. A little nursing —

War. A little devil!

Snit. Mr. Craggs, will you oblige me with a pinch of snuff? Thank you, sir.

War. You talk of nursing. How long nursing?

Snit. How long nursing? (*Dusts the snuff from his fingers, and makes a mental calculation.*) For your involved estate, sir? In good hands? S. and C.'s, say? Six or seven years.

War. (*Impatiently.*) To starve for six or seven years!

Snit. To starve for six or seven years, Mr. Warden, would be very uncommon indeed. You might get another estate by showing yourself, the while. But we don't think you could do it, — speaking for Self and Craggs, — and consequently don't advise it.

War. What do you advise?

Snit. Nursing, I say. Some few years of nursing by Self and Craggs would bring it round. But, to enable us to make terms, and hold terms, and you to keep terms, you must go away; you must live abroad. As to starvation, we could insure you some hundreds a year to starve upon, even in the beginning, — I dare say, Mr. Warden.

War. Hundreds! And I have spent thousands!

Snit. (*Putting his papers away.*) That, there is no doubt about. No doubt a—bout.

War. After all, my iron-headed friend —

Snit. (*Pointing to CRAGGS.*) Self and — excuse me — Craggs.

War. I beg Mr. Craggs's pardon. After all, my iron-headed friends, you don't know half my ruin yet. (*SNITCHEY and CRAGGS start, and stare at him.*) I am not only deep in debt, but I am deep in —

Snit. Not in love!

War. Yes! (*Falls back in his chair, and surveys them with his hands in his pockets.*) Deep in love.

Snit. And not with an heiress, sir?

War. Not with an heiress.

Snit. Nor a rich lady?

War. Nor a rich lady, that I know of—except in beauty and merit.

Snit. A single lady, I trust?

War. Certainly.

Snit. (*Suddenly squaring around to him.*) It's not one of Dr. Jeddler's daughters?

War. Yes!

Snit. Not his younger daughter?

War. Yes.

Snit. (*Much relieved.*) Mr. Craggs, will you oblige me with another pinch of snuff? Thank you! I am happy to say it don't signify, Mr. Warden; she's engaged, sir, she's bespoke. My partner can corroborate me. We know the fact.

Craggs. We know the fact.

War. Why, so do I, perhaps. What of that? Are you men of the world, and did you never hear of a woman changing her mind?

Snit. There certainly have been actions for breach, brought against both spinsters and widows; but, in the majority of cases—

War. (*Impatiently.*) Cases! Don't talk to me of cases! The general precedent is in a much larger volume than any of your law books. Besides, do you think I have lived six weeks in the Doctor's house for nothing?

Snit. (*To CRAGGS.*) I think, sir, that, of all the scrapes Mr. Warden's horses have brought him into at one time and another, the worst scrape may turn

out to be, if he talks in this way, his having been ever left by one of them at the Doctor's garden wall, with three broken ribs, a snapped collar-bone, and the Lord knows how many bruises. We didn't think so much of it at the time, when we knew he was going on well under the Doctor's hands and roof; but it looks bad now, sir. Bad? It looks very bad. Doctor Jeddler too — our client, Mr. Craggs.

Craggs. Mr. Alfred Heathfield, too — a sort of client, Mr. Snitchey.

War. Mr. Michael Warden too, — a kind of client, and no bad one either, having played the fool for ten or twelve years. However, Mr. Michael Warden has sown his wild oats now, — there's their crop, in that box; and he means to repent and be wise. And, in proof of it, Mr. Michael Warden means, if he can, to marry Marion, the Doctor's lovely daughter, and to carry her away with him.

Snit. Really, Mr. Craggs —

War. Really, Mr. Snitchey, and Mr. Craggs, partners both, you know your duty to your clients; and you know well enough, I am sure, that it is no part of it to interfere in a mere love affair, which I am obliged to confide to you. I am not going to carry the young lady off without her own consent. There's nothing illegal in it. I never was Mr. Heathfield's bosom friend. I violate no confidence of his. I love where he loves; and I mean to win where he would win, if I can.

Snit. (*Anxiously.*) He can't, Mr. Craggs; he can't do it, sir. She dotes on Mr. Alfred.

War. Does she?

Snit. Mr. Craggs, she dotes on him, sir.

War. I didn't live six weeks, some few months ago, in the Doctor's house for nothing; and I doubted that soon. She would have doted on him, if her sister could have brought it about; but I watched them. Marion avoided his name, avoided the subject; shrunk from the least allusion to it, with evident distress.

Snit. Why should she, Mr. Craggs, you know? Why should she, sir?

War. I don't know why she should, though there are many likely reasons; but I know she does. She was very young when she made the engagement, — if it may be called one; I am not even sure of that, — and has repented of it, perhaps. Perhaps — it seems a foppish thing to say, but upon my soul I don't mean it in that light — she may have fallen in love with me, as I have fallen in love with her.

Snit. He, he! Mr. Alfred, her old playfellow too, you remember, Mr. Craggs; knew her almost from a baby!

War. Which makes it the more probable that she may be tired of his idea, and not indisposed to exchange it for the newer one of another lover, who presents himself under romantic circumstances; has the not unfavorable reputation — with a country girl — of having lived thoughtlessly and gayly, without doing much harm to anybody; and who, for his youth and figure, and so forth, — this may seem foppish again, but upon my soul I don't mean it in that light, — might, perhaps, pass muster in a crowd with Mr. Alfred himself.

Snit. (*Aside.*) A dangerous sort of fellow to

seem to catch the spark he wants from a young lady's eyes.

War. (*Rising, and taking SNITCHEY by the button.*) Now, observe, Snitchey, and Craggs (*takes him by the button also*), I don't ask you for any advice. You are right to keep quite aloof from all parties in such a matter. I am briefly going to review, in half a dozen words, my position and intention, and then I shall leave it to you to do the best for me, in money matters, that you can; seeing that, if I run away with the Doctor's beautiful daughter (as I hope to do, and to become another man under her bright influence), it will be, for the moment, more chargeable than running away alone. But I shall soon make all that up in an altered life.

Snit. I think it will be better not to hear this, Mr. Craggs? (*Both listen attentively.*)

Craggs. I think not.

War. Well! You needn't hear it. I'll mention it, however. I don't mean to ask the Doctor's consent, because he wouldn't give it me. But I mean to do the Doctor no wrong or harm, because (besides there being nothing serious in such trifles, as he says) I hope to rescue his child, my Marion, from what I see — I *know* — she dreads, and contemplates with misery; that is, the return of this old lover. If anything in the world is true, it is true that she dreads his return. Nobody is injured so far. I am so harried and worried here, just now, that I lead the life of a flying-fish. I skulk about in the dark; I am shut out of my own house, and warned off my own grounds; but that house and those grounds, and

many an acre besides, will come back to me one day, as you know and say; and Marion will probably be richer — on your showing, who are never sanguine — ten years hence, as my wife, than as the wife of Alfred Heathfield; whose return she dreads (remember that), and in whom, or in any man, my passion is not surpassed. Who is injured yet? It is a fair case throughout. My right is as good as his, if she decide in my favor, and I will try my right by her alone. You will like to know no more after this, and I will tell you no more. Now you know my purpose, and wants. When must I leave here?

Snit. In a week. Mr. Craggs?

Craggs. In something less, I should say.

War. In a month. This day month. To-day is Thursday. Succeed or fail, on this day month I go.

Snit. It's too long a delay — much too long. But let it be so. (*Aside.*) I thought he'd have stipulated for three. Are you going? Good night, sir!

War. Good night! You'll live to see me making a good use of riches yet. Henceforth the star of my destiny is — Marion!

Snit. (*Lighting him out.*) Take care of the stairs, sir, for she don't shine there. Good night!

War. Good night!

[*Exit* WARDEN. SNITCHEY and CRAGGS stand staring at each other.

Snit. What do you think of all this, Mr. Craggs? (*CRAGGS shakes his head.*) It was our opinion, on the day when that release was executed, that there was something curious in the parting of that pair, I recollect.

Craggs. It was.

Snit. Perhaps he deceives himself altogether. (*Locks his box, and puts it away.*) Or, if he don't, a little bit of fickleness and perfidy is not a miracle, Mr. Craggs. And yet I thought that pretty face was very true. I thought (*puts on his coat and gloves, and snuffs out one candle*) that I had even seen her character becoming stronger and more resolved of late — more like her sister's.

Craggs. Mrs. Craggs was of the same opinion.

Snit. (*Shaking his head.*) I'd really give a trifle to-night if I could believe that Mr. Warden was reckoning without his host; but, light-headed, capricious, and unballasted as he is, he knows something of the world and its people (he ought to, for he has bought what he does know dear enough); and I can't quite think that. We had better not interfere; we can do nothing, Mr. Craggs, but keep quiet.

Craggs. Nothing.

Snit. Our friend the Doctor makes light of such things; I hope he mayn't stand in need of his philosophy. Our friend Alfred talks of the battle of life; I hope he mayn't be cut down early in the day. Have you got your hat, Mr. Craggs? I am going to put the other candle out.

Craggs. All ready.

[*SNITCHEY puts out the other candle, and exeunt omnes.*

HOME.

SCENE, DR. JEDDLER'S Study. DR. JEDDLER *in his easy-chair*; GRACE, *sewing*; MARION, *reading aloud*.

Marion. (*Reading.*) "And being in her own home, her home made exquisitely dear by these remembrances, she now began to know that the great trial of her heart must soon come on, and could not be delayed. O Home, our comforter and friend when others fall away, to part with whom, at any step between the cradle and the grave" —

Grace. Marion, my love!

Dr. J. Why, Puss! What's the matter?

Mar. (*Reads, with trembling voice.*) "To part with whom, at any step between the cradle and the grave, is always sorrowful. O Home, so true to us, so often slighted in return, be lenient to them that turn away from thee, and do not haunt their erring footsteps too reproachfully! Let no kind looks, no well-remembered smiles be seen upon thy phantom face. Let no ray of affection, welcome gentleness, forbearance, cordiality, shine from thy white head. Let no old loving word, or tone, rise up in judgment against thy deserter; but if thou canst look harshly and severely, do, in mercy to the Penitent."

Grace. Dear Marion, read no more to-night.

Mar. (*Closing the book.*) I cannot. The words seem all on fire!

Dr. J. (*Laughing, and patting her on the head.*)

What! overcome by a story-book! Print and paper! Well, well, it's all one. It's as rational to make a serious matter of print and paper as of anything else. But, dry your eyes, love, dry your eyes. I dare say the heroine has got home again long ago, and made it up all round — and if she hasn't, a real home is only four walls; and a fictitious one, mere rags and ink. (CLEMENCY NEWCOME *looks in at the door*, c.) What's the matter now?

New. It's only me, Mister.

Dr. F. And what's the matter with you?

New. (*Entering.*) O, bless you, nothing ain't the matter with me. Nothing ain't the matter with me; but — come a little closer, Mister. (DR. JEDDLER *approaches her.*)

New. You said I wasn't to give you one before them, you know.

Dr. F. One? What?

New. (*Hunts first in one pocket, and then in the other, and draws out a letter, which she hands to DR. JEDDLER; he opens it slowly*) Britain was riding by on an errand, and see the mail come in, and waited for it. There's A. H. in the corner. (*Aside.*) Mr. Alfred's on his journey home, I bet. We shall have a wedding in the house — there was two spoons in my saucer this morning. O Luck, how slow he opens it!

Dr. F. Here! Girls! I can't help it; I never could keep a secret in my life. There are not many secrets, indeed, worth being kept in such a — Well! never mind that. Alfred's coming home, my dears, directly.

Mar. Directly?

Dr. F. (*Pinching her cheek.*) What! The story-book is soon forgotten! I thought the news would dry those tears. Yes. Let it be a surprise, he says, here. But I can't let it be a surprise. He must have a welcome.

Mar. Directly!

Dr. F. Why, perhaps, not what your impatience calls directly, but pretty soon, too. Let us see! Let us see! To-day is Thursday — is it not? Then he promises to be here, this day month.

Mar. (*Softly.*) This day month!

Grace. (*Kissing her.*) A gay day and a holiday for us. Long looked forward to, dearest, and come at last.

[*DR. JEDDLER returns to his easy-chair, and reads the letter again.*

Dr. F. (*Looking at the fire.*) Ah! The day was, when you and he, Grace, used to trot about, arm-in-arm, in his holiday time, like a couple of walking dolls. You remember?

Grace. (*Sewing.*) I remember!

Dr. F. This day month, indeed! That hardly seems a twelvemonth ago. And where was my little Marion then!

Mar. Never far from her sister, however little. Grace was everything to me, even when she was a young child herself.

Dr. F. True, Puss, true. She was a staid little woman, was Grace, and a wise housekeeper, and a busy, quiet, pleasant body; bearing with our humors, and anticipating our wishes, and always ready to forget

her own, even in those times. I never knew you positive or obstinate, Grace, my darling, even then, on any subject but one.

Grace. I am afraid I have changed sadly for the worse since. What was that one, father?

Dr. F. Alfred, of course. Nothing would serve you, but you must be called Alfred's wife; so we called you Alfred's wife; and you liked it better, I believe (odd as it seems now), than being called a Duchess, if we could have made you one.

Grace. Indeed!

Dr. F. Why, don't you remember?

Grace. I think I remember something of it, but not much. It's so long ago. (*Hums a tune.*) Alfred will find a real wife soon, and that will be a happy time, indeed, for all of us. My three years' trust is nearly at an end, Marion. It has been a very easy one. I shall tell Alfred, when I give you back to him, that you have loved him dearly all the time, and that he has never once needed my good services. May I tell him so, love?

Mar. Tell him, dear Grace, that there never was a trust so generously, nobly, steadfastly discharged; and that I have loved *you*, all the time, dearer and dearer every day; and O! how dearly now!

Grace. Nay! I can scarcely tell him that; we will leave my deserts to Alfred's imagination. It will be liberal enough, dear Marion; like your own.

[*Curtain.*]

A MYSTERY.

SCENE: Kitchen in DR. JEDDLER'S house. *Door, c., leading into garden; two doors, r. Stove, l. A table, c. BRITAIN seated, a pipe in his mouth; a mug of beer at his elbow. Enter, r., CLEMENCY NEWCOME, and sits at table opposite BRITAIN.*

Britain. (*Nodding to NEWCOME.*) Well, Clemmy, how are you by this time, and what's the news?

Newcome. A letter from Mr. Heathfield. He's coming home.

Brit. Is he, indeed! (*Puffs slowly at his pipe.*) There'll be another job for Snitchey and Craggs, I suppose. More witnessing for you and me, perhaps, Clemmy!

New. Lor! I wish it was me, Britain!

Brit. Wish what was you?

New. A-going to be married.

Brit. (*Laughing heartily.*) Yes! you're a likely subject for that! Poor Clem!

New. (*Laughing.*) Yes, I'm a likely subject for that — ain't I?

Brit. You'll never be married, you know.

New. Don't you think I ever shall, though?

Brit. (*Shaking his head.*) Not a chance of it!

New. Only think! Well! — I suppose *you* mean to, Britain, one of these days — don't you?

Brit. (*Blowing smoke out of his mouth and reflecting.*) Well, I'm not altogether clear about it. However, I suppose I may come to that at last. — Ye-es — very likely.

New. I wish her joy, whoever she may be.

Brit. O, she'll have that, safe enough.

New. (*Leaning with both elbows on the table and staring at the candle.*) But she wouldn't have led quite such a joyful life as she will lead, and wouldn't have had quite such a sociable sort of husband as she will have, if it hadn't been for — not that I went to do it, for it was accidental, I am sure — if it hadn't been for me — now would she, Britain?

Brit. (*Gravely.*) Certainly not. O! I'm greatly beholden to you, you know, Clem.

New. Lor, how nice that is to think of! (*Anoints her elbow with candle grease.*)

Brit. You see I've made a good many investigations of one sort and another in my time, having been always of an inquiring turn of mind; and I've read a good many books about the general Rights of things and Wrongs of things, for I went into the literary line myself when I began life.

New. Did you, though?

Brit. Yes! I was hid for the best part of two years behind a book stall, ready to fly out if anybody pocketed a volume; and after that, I was light porter to a stay and mantua-maker, in which capacity I was employed to carry about, in oilskin baskets, nothing but deceptions — which soured my spirits and disturbed my confidence in human nature; and after that, I heard a world of discussions in this house, which soured my spirits fresh; and my opinion after all is, that, as a safe and comfortable sweetener of the same, and as a pleasant guide through life, there's nothing like a nutmeg-grater — (*NEWCOME is about to speak,*

but he stops her by putting out his hand) — combined with a thimble.

New. (*Folding her arms and patting her elbows.*) Do as you wold, you know, and cetrer, eh? Such a short cut — ain't it?

Brit. I'm not sure that it's what would be considered good philosophy. I've my doubts about that; but it were as well, and saves a quantity of snarling, which the genuine article don't always.

New. See how you used to go on once, yourself, you know!

Brit. Ah! But the most extraordinary thing, Clemmy, is, that I should live to be brought round, through you. That's the strange part of it. Through you! Why, I suppose you haven't so much as half an idea in your head.

New. (*Shaking her head and laughing.*) No, I don't suppose I have.

Brit. I'm pretty sure of it.

New. O! I dare say you're right. I don't pretend to none. I don't want any.

Brit. (*Taking his pipe from his mouth and laughing.*) What a natural you are, Clemmy! (*Wipes his eyes. NEWCOME also laughs.*) I can't help liking you; you're a regular good creature in your way, so shake hands, Clem. Whatever happens, I'll always take notice of you, and be a friend to you.

New. Will you? Well! that's very good of you.

Brit. (*Knocking the ashes out of his pipe.*) Yes, yes, I'll stand by you. Hark! That's a curious noise!

New. Noise!

Brit. A footstep outside. Somebody dropping from the wall, it sounded like. Are they all abed up stairs?

New. Yes, all abed by this time.

Brit. Didn't you hear anything?

New. No. (*Both listen attentively.*)

Brit. (*Rising and taking down a lantern.*) I tell you what, I'll have a look round, before I go to bed myself, for satisfaction's sake. Undo the door while I light this, Clemmy! (*Lights lantern; NEW-COME opens c. d.*)

New. It's all your fancy. You'll have your walk for your pains.

Brit. (*Taking his lantern and the poker.*) Very likely. (*Exit c.*)

New. (*Looking after him.*) It's as quiet as a church-yard, and almost as ghostly, too.

Enter MARION, R.

New. (*Turning.*) What's that!

Mar. Hush! You have always loved me — have you not!

New. Loved you, child! You may be sure I have!

Mar. I am sure. And I may trust you — may I not? There is no one else just now, in whom I *can* trust.

New. (*Heartily.*) Yes.

Mar. (*Pointing to the door, c.*) There is some one there, whom I must see, and speak with to-night. (*The figure of a man appears in the darkness outside. NEW-COME starts back.*) Michael Warden, for God's sake retire! Not now! In another moment you may

be discovered. Not now! Wait, if you can, in some concealment. I will come presently. (*Figure vanishes. To NEWCOME.*) Don't go to bed. Wait here for me! I have been seeking to speak to you for an hour past. O, be true to me!

[*Exit MARION, R., NEWCOME falls trembling into a chair, L. C.*

Brit. (*Entering, C. D.*) All still and peaceable. Nobody there. Fancy, I suppose. (*Locks the door.*) One of the effects of having a lively imagination. Halloo! Why, what's the matter?

New. (*Nervously.*) Matter! That's good in you, Britain — that is! After going and frightening one out of one's life with noises, and lanterns, and I don't know what all. Matter! O, yes!

Brit. (*Blowing out lantern and hanging it up.*) If you're frightened out of your life by a lantern, Clemmy, that apparition's very soon got rid of. But you're as bold as brass in general, and were, after the noise of the lantern, too. What have you taken into your head? Not an idea, eh?

New. (*Putting away table and chairs.*) Good-night, Britain.

Brit. (*Staring at her.*) Well, well! There's no accounting for a woman's whims! Good-night!

[*Exit R. U. E., with candle.*

Mar. (*Re-entering, R.*) Open the door, and stand there close beside me, while I speak to him, outside.

[*NEWCOME unlocks the C. D.; turns to MARION, and throws her arms about her neck.*

New. (*Sobbing.*) It's little that I know, my dear, very little; but I know that this should not be. Think of what you do!

Mar. (*Gently.*) I have thought of it many times.

New. Once more! Till to-morrow. (*MARION shakes her head.*) For Mr. Alfred's sake! Him that you used to love so dearly, once!

Mar. (*Hiding her face in her hands.*) Once!

New. Let me go out. I'll tell him what you like. Don't cross the door-step to-night. I'm sure no good will come of it. O, it was an unhappy day when Mr. Warden was ever brought here! Think of your good father, darling — of your sister.

Mar. (*Hastily raising her head.*) I have. You don't know what I do. You don't know what I do. I *must* speak to him. You are the best and truest friend in all the world for what you have said to me, but I must take this step. Will you go with me, Clemency (*Kisses her*), or shall I go alone?

[*NEWCOME slowly opens the door, and they go out together, MARION holding NEWCOME'S hand. Curtain.*

THE WELCOME.

SCENE: DR. JEDDLER'S Parlors, arranged for an evening party. Present, GRACE and MARION.

Grace. (*Arranging a wreath on MARION'S head.*) The next wreath I adjust on this fair head will be a marriage wreath, or I am no true prophet, dear.

Marion. (*Embracing her.*) A moment, Grace. Don't leave me yet. Are you sure that I want nothing more?

Grace. My art can go no farther, dear girl; nor your beauty. I never saw you look so beautiful as now.

Mar. I never was so happy.

Grace. Ay, but there is a greater happiness in store. In such another home, as cheerful and as bright as this looks now, Alfred and his young wife will soon be living.

Mar. (*Smiling.*) It is a happy home, Grace, in your fancy. I can see it in your eyes. I know it *will* be happy, dear. How glad I am to know it!

Dr. J. (*Entering, L.*) Well, here we are, all ready for Alfred, eh? He can't be here until pretty late — an hour or so before midnight — so there'll be plenty of time for making merry before he comes. He'll not find us with the ice unbroken. (*Calling off.*) Pile up the fire here, Britain! Let it shine upon the holly till it winks again! It's a world of nonsense, Puss; true lovers and all the rest of it — all nonsense: but we'll be nonsensical with the rest of 'em, and give our true

lover a mad welcome. Upon my word (*looks proudly at them*), I'm not clear to-night, among other absurdities, but that I'm the father of two handsome girls.

Mar. All that one of them has ever done, or may do — may do, dearest father — to cause you pain or grief, forgive her — forgive her now, when her heart is full. Say that you forgive her. That you will forgive her. That she shall always share your love, and — (*Hides her face on his shoulder.*)

Dr. J. Tut, tut, tut! Forgive! What have I to forgive? Heydey! if our true lovers come back to flurry us like this, we must hold them at a distance, until we're properly prepared to meet 'em. Kiss me, Puss. Forgive! Why, what a silly child you are! If you had vexed and crossed me fifty times a day, instead of not at all, I'd forgive you everything, but such a supplication. Kiss me again, Puss. There! Prospective and retrospective — a clear score between us. Pile up the fire here! Would you freeze the people on this bleak December night! Let us be light, and warm, and merry, or I'll not forgive some of you!

[*Company begins to assemble. Enter MR. and MRS. CRAGGS, arm in arm, c. d.; MRS. SNITCHEY, alone. Salutations exchanged. More guests arrive; music, (on the stage); Sets formed for dancing.*

Dr. J. Why! where is Mr. Snitchey, ma'am? What's become of *him*?

Mrs. Snitchey. I don't know, Doctor Jeddler: doubtless Mr. Craggs does. *I am never told.*

Mrs. Craggs. That nasty office!

Mrs. Snit. I wish it was burnt down!

Craggs. (*Looking uneasily about.*) He's — he's — there's a little matter of business that keeps my partner rather late.

Mrs. Snit. Oh — h! Business! Don't tell me!

Mrs. Craggs. We know what *business* means. I wonder *you* could come away, Mr. Craggs.

Mrs. Snit. Mr. Craggs is fortunate, I'm sure.

Mrs. Craggs. That office so engrosses 'em!

Mrs. Snit. A person with an office has no business to be married at all.

Mrs. Craggs. (*To MR. CRAGGS.*) Your Snitch-eyes are deceiving you behind your back, sir, and you'll find it out, when it's too late.

Craggs. (*Going to GRACE.*) Good evening, ma'am. You look charmingly. Your — Miss — your sister, Miss Marion, is she —

Grace. Oh, she's quite well, Mr. Craggs.

Craggs. Yes — I — is she here?

Grace. Here! Don't you see her yonder? Going to dance?

[CRAGGS *puts on his spectacles, and looks; coughs; removes the spectacles, and puts them away. Dancing commences, c.; CRAGGS looks on, R. SNITCHEY enters, unobserved, c. D.; crosses to CRAGGS, R., and touches him on the arm.*

Craggs. (*Starting.*) Is he gone?

Snit. Hush! He has been with me for three hours and more. He went over everything. He looked into all our arrangements for him, and was very particular indeed. He — Humph!

[*Dance breaks up. MARION passes by without seeing them; goes slowly through the crowd, and disappears, L., looking over her shoulder at GRACE, as she goes out.*

Craggs. (R.) You see! All safe and well. He didn't recur to that subject, I suppose?

Snit. (R.) Not a word.

Craggs. And is he really gone? Is he safe away?

Snit. He keeps to his word. He drops down the river with the tide, in that shell of a boat of his, and so goes out to sea on this dark night! — a dare-devil he is — before the wind. There's no such lonely road anywhere else. That's one thing. The tide flows, he says, an hour before midnight — about this time. I'm glad it's over! (*Wiping his forehead.*)

Craggs. What do you think about —

Snit. (*Looking straight before him.*) Hush! I understand you. Don't mention names, and don't let us seem to be talking secrets. I don't know what to think, and, to tell you the truth, I don't care now. It's a great relief. His self-love deceived him, I suppose. Perhaps the young lady coquetted a little. The evidence would seem to point that way. Alfred not arrived?

Craggs. Not yet. Expected every minute.

Snit. (*Wiping his forehead again.*) Good! It's a great relief. I haven't been so nervous since we've been in partnership. I intend to spend the evening now, Mr. Craggs.

[*MRS. CRAGGS and MRS. SNITCHEY join them.*

Mrs. Snit. (R.) It has been the theme of general comment, Mr. Snitchey. I hope the office is satisfied.

Snit. Satisfied with what, my dear?

Mrs. Snit. With the exposure of a defenceless woman to ridicule and remark. That is quite in the way of the office, *that* is.

Mrs. Craggs. I really, myself, have been so long accustomed to connect the office with everything opposed to domesticity, that I am glad to know it as the avowed enemy of my peace. There is something honest in that, at all events.

Craggs. My dear, your good opinion is invaluable, but *I* never avowed that the office was the enemy of your peace.

Mrs. Craggs. No, not you, indeed! You wouldn't be worthy of the office, if you had the candor to.

Snit. (*Giving MRS. SNITCHEY his arm.*) As to my having been away to-night, my dear, the deprivation has been mine, I'm sure; but, as Mr. Craggs knows —

Mrs. Snit. (*Drawing him aside, L. C.*) Mr. Snitchey, look at that man! (*Points to CRAGGS.*) Will you do me the favor to look at him?

Snit. At which man, my dear?

Mrs. Snit. Your chosen companion; *I'm* no companion to you, Mr. Snitchey.

Snit. Yes, yes, you are, my dear.

Mrs. Snit. (*Smiling majestically.*) No, no, I'm not. I know my station. Will you look at your chosen companion, Mr. Snitchey; at your referee; at the keeper of your secrets; at the man you trust; at your other self, in short? (*SNITCHEY looks at*

CRAGGS.) If you can look that man in the eye this night, and not know that you are deluded, practised upon, made the victim of his arts, and bent down prostrate to his will by some unaccountable fascination, which it is impossible to explain, and against which no warning of mine is of the least avail, all I can say is — I pity you!

Mrs. Craggs. (To MR. CRAGGS, R.) Is it possible, Mr. Craggs, that you can so blind yourself to your Snitcheys as not to feel your true position? Do you mean to say that you have seen your Snitcheys come into this room, and have not plainly seen that there is reservation, cunning, treachery, in the man? Can you have the least doubt that there's something weighing on the conscience of your precious Snitcheys (if he has a conscience), that won't bear the light? Did ever anybody but your Snitcheys come to festive entertainments like a burglar?

[MR. CRAGGS *shrugs his shoulders, and does not reply.* A country dance is called.

Craggs. (Approaching MRS. SNITCHEY.) May I have the pleasure, ma'am?

Mrs. Snit. Why don't you ask some one else, Mr. Craggs? You'll be glad, I know, if I decline.

[*She takes his arm.*

Snit. (Crossing to MRS. CRAGGS.) Will you do me the honor?

Mrs. Craggs. (Focosely.) Really, Mr. Snitchey! I wonder you can dance out of the office!

[*Takes his arm; they join the dancers.*

Exit GRACE; L.; DR. JEDDLER *rings.*

Enter BRITAIN, L. U. E.

Dr. F. (L.) Anything been seen, Britain? Anything been heard?

Brit. Too dark to see far, sir. Too much noise inside the house to hear.

Dr. F. That's right! The gayer welcome for him. How goes the time?

Brit. Just twelve, sir. He can't be long, sir.

Dr. F. Stir up the fire, and throw another log upon it. Let him see his welcome blazing out upon the night — good boy! — as he comes along.

[*Exit BRITAIN, L. U. E. The dance goes on.*

Enter NEWCOME hastily, L. She goes to C. D., and meets ALFRED as he is entering. She recoils with a cry.

Alf. Clemency, don't you know me?

New. (*Pushing him back.*) Don't come in! Go away! Don't ask me why. Don't come in.

Alf. What is the matter?

New. I don't know. I—I am afraid to think. Go back. (*A scream in room, L.*) Hark! (*GRACE enters, followed by her father, the latter with a paper in his hand. Both hurry to door, C.*)

Alf. (*Catching GRACE in his arms.*) Grace! What is it? Is she dead? (*She disengages herself, and falls at his feet. The guests crowd around them. ALFRED, on his knees, bends over GRACE.*) What is it? Will no one look at me? Will no one speak to me? Does no one know me? Is there no voice, among you all, to tell me what it is?

Voices. (*In a low murmur.*) She is gone!

Alf. Gone?

Dr. F. (*Covering his face with his hands.*)
Fled, my dear Alfred! Gone from her home and
us! To-night! She writes that she has made her
innocent and blameless choice — entreats that we
will forgive her — prays that we will not forget her —
and is gone!

Alf. (*Starting up.*) With whom? Where?
[*Falls back into his former position. Ta-*
bleau. Curtain.]

"THE NUTMEG-GRATER."

SCENE: Bar-room of the Inn; L. C. *Time, six years later. Tea table spread for two; near window, R., another table; chairs, &c.*

Brit. (*Going to c. d., and looking down the road.*) Mrs. Britain is rather late. It's tea time. (*Steps out and looks up at the house.*) It's just the sort of house I should wish to stop at, if I didn't keep it. (*Re-enters.*) She's a long time coming. (*Sits down.*) She hadn't much to do, I think. There were a few little matters of business after market, but not many. (*Wagon heard.*) O! here we are at last! (*Rising and going to door.*) You're late, Clemmy!

Mrs. B. (CLEMENCY NEWCOME.) Why, you see, Ben, I've had a deal to do! (*Counting bundles as BRITAIN brings them in.*) Eight, nine, ten — where's eleven? O! my basket's eleven! It's all right. (*Calling off, c. d.*) Put the horse up, Harry, and if he coughs again give him a warm mash to-night. Eight, nine, ten. Why, where's eleven? O, I forgot, it's all right. How's the children, Ben?

Brit. Hearty, Clemmy, hearty.

Mrs. B. Bless their precious faces! (*Taking off her bonnet and smoothing her hair.*) Give us a kiss, old man. (BRITAIN *complies.*) I think (*drawing papers and account books from her pocket*) I've done everything. Bills all settled — turnips sold — brewer's account looked into and paid — 'bacco pipes ordered — seventeen pound four paid into the Bank

— Dr. Heathfield's charge for little Clem — you'll guess what that is — Dr. Heathfield won't take nothing again, Ben.

Brit. I thought he wouldn't.

Mrs. B. No. He says whatever family you was to have, Ben, he'd never put you to the cost of a half-penny. Not if you was to have twenty. (MR. BRITAIN *looks serious, and stares at the wall.*) Ain't it kind of him?

Brit. Very. It's the sort of kindness that I wouldn't presume upon, on any account.

Mrs. B. No, of course not. Then there's the pony — he fetched eight pound two; and that ain't bad — is it?

Brit. It's very good.

Mrs. B. (c.) I'm glad you're pleased! I thought you would be; and I think that's all, and so no more at present from yours and cetrer, C. Britain. Ha, ha, ha! There! Take all the papers, and lock 'em up. O, wait a minute. Here's a printed bill to stick on the wall. Wet from the printer's. How nice it smells!

Brit. (c.) (*Looking over the bill.*) What's this?

Mrs. B. I don't know. I haven't read a word of it.

Brit. (*Reading.*) "To be sold by auction, unless previously disposed of by private contract."

Mrs. B. They always put that.

Brit. Yes, but they don't always put this. Look here: "Mansion, &c. — offices, &c. — shrubberies, &c. — ring fence, &c. — Messrs. Snitchey and Craggs, &c. — ornamental portion of the unencumbered freehold

property of Michael Warden, Esquire, intending to continue to reside abroad!"

Mrs. B. Intending to continue to reside abroad!

Brit. Here it is. Look!

Mrs. B. (*Shaking her head sorrowfully, and patting her elbows.*) And it was only this very day that I heard it whispered at the old house, that better and plainer news had been half promised of her soon! Dear — dear — dear! There'll be heavy hearts, Ben, yonder.

Brit. (*Sighing.*) Ah! it's a sad thing, and I can't make it out. I left off trying, long ago.

Mrs. B. (*Rousing herself.*) Well! I must go and look after the children.

[*Exit L., BRITAIN fastens the bill against the wall, R.*

Brit. (*Putting away the papers which his wife brought home.*) What a hand she is for business, to be sure!

Mrs. B. (*Re-entering.*) The two boys are playing in the coach-house, and little Clem is sleeping like a picture, so we'll have tea. (*They sit at table, BRITAIN, R.; MRS. BRITAIN, L.*) It's the first time I've sat down quietly to-day, I declare. (*Hands BRITAIN his tea.*) How that bill (*cuts some bread*) does set me thinking of old times!

Brit. (*Drinking from his saucer.*) Ah!

Mrs. B. That same Mr. Michael Warden lost me my old place.

Brit. And got you your husband.

Mrs. B. Well! So he did, and many thanks to him.

Brit. Man's the creature of habit. (*Surveys her*

over his saucer.) I had somehow got used to you, Clem, and I found I shouldn't be able to get on without you. So we went and got made man and wife. Ha, ha! We! Who'd have thought it!

Mrs. B. Who, indeed! It was very good of you, Ben.

Brit. No, no, no. Nothing worth mentioning.

Mrs. B. O, yes it was, Ben. I'm sure I think so, and am very much obliged to you. Ah! (*looking again at the bill*), when she was known to be gone, and out of reach, dear girl, I couldn't help telling — for her sake quite as much as theirs — what I knew — could I?

Brit. You told it, any how.

Mrs. B. And Dr. Jeddler (*puts down her teacup, and looks thoughtfully at the bill*), in his grief and passion, turned me out of house and home! I never have been so glad of anything in all my life, as that I didn't say an angry word to him, and hadn't an angry feeling towards him, even then; for he repented that truly, afterwards. How often he has sat in this room, and told me over and over again he was sorry for it! — the last time, only yesterday, when you were out. How often he has sat in this room, and talked to me, hour after hour, about one thing and another, in which he made believe to be interested! — but only for the sake of the days that are gone by, and because he knows she used to like me, Ben!

Brit. Why, how did you ever come to catch a glimpse of that, Clem?

Mrs. B. I don't know, I'm sure, (*Blows her tea.*) Bless you, I couldn't tell you, if you was to offer me a reward of a hundred pound.

[*Whilst she is speaking a stranger (MICHAEL WARDEN), cloaked and booted, stands in the open doorway, c., listening. MR. and MRS. BRITAIN rise hastily.*

Brit. (*Saluting.*) Will you please to walk up stairs, sir? There's a very nice room up stairs, sir.

Warden. (*Looking at MRS. BRITAIN.*) Thank you. May I come in here?

Mrs. B. O, surely, if you like, sir. What would you please to want, sir? [WARDEN reads the bill.

Mr. B. Excellent property that, sir.

War. (*Turning to MRS. BRITAIN.*) You were asking me —

Mrs. B. What you would please to take, sir?

War. (*Sitting at table near the window, R.*) If you will let me have a draught of ale, and will let me have it here, without being any interruption to your meal, I shall be much obliged to you.

[*Sits down and looks out of the window.*

MRS. BRITAIN brings a pitcher of ale and a glass.

War. (*Filling his glass and holding it up.*) To the House, ma'am! (*Drinks.*) It's a new house — is it not?

Brit. Not particularly new, sir.

Mrs. B. Between five and six years old.

War. I think I heard you mention Dr. Jeddler's name, as I came in. That bill reminds me of him; for I happen to know something of that story, by hearsay, and through certain connections of mine. Is the old man living?

Mrs. B. Yes, he's living, sir.

War. Much changed?

Mrs. B. Since when, sir?

War. Since his daughter — went away.

Mrs. B. Yes! he's greatly changed since then. He's gray and old, and hasn't the same way with him at all; but I think he's happy now. He has taken on with his sister since then, and goes to see her very often. That did him good, directly. At first, he was sadly broken down; and it was enough to make one's heart bleed, to see him wandering about, railing at the world; but a great change for the better came over him after a year or two, and then he began to like to talk about his lost daughter, and to praise her, ay, and the world too! and was never tired of saying, with the tears in his poor eyes, how beautiful and good she was. He had forgiven her, then. That was about the same time as Miss Grace's marriage. Britain, you remember?

Brit. I remember very well.

War. The sister *is* married, then. (*A pause.*)
To whom?

Mrs. B. (*Excitedly.*) Did you never hear?

War. (*Filling his glass again.*) I should like to hear.

Mrs. B. Ah! It would be a long story, if it was properly told. (*Rests her chin on her hand, and shakes her head thoughtfully.*) It would be a long story, I am sure.

War. But told as a short one.

Mrs. B. (*Talking half to herself.*) Told as a short one, what would there be to tell? That they grieved together, and remembered her together, like a person dead; that they were so tender of her, never

would reproach her, called her back to one another as she used to be, and found excuses for her! Every one knows that. I'm sure *I* do. No one better. (*Wipes her eyes with her hand.*)

War. And so —

Mrs. B. And so they at last were married. They were married on her birthday — it comes round again to-morrow — very quiet, very humble like, but very happy. Mr. Alfred said, one night when they were walking in the orchard, “Grace, shall our wedding day be Marion’s birthday?” And it was.

War. And they have lived happily together?

Mrs. B. Ay. No two people ever more so. They have had no sorrow but this.

[WARDEN looks out of the window. MRS. BRITAIN makes signs to MR. BRITAIN, points to the bill, and forms two words with her lips. MR. BRITAIN stares at her, then at the bill, and then at WARDEN.]

Brit. (*Aside.*) Eh! what, milk and water? (*More signs from MRS. BRITAIN.*) Monthly warning! Eh! what does she say? (*More signs.*) Mice and walnuts? (*MRS. BRITAIN gives it up, and draws her chair nearer to WARDEN.*)

War. And what is the after history of the young lady who went away? They know it, I suppose?

Mrs. B. (*Shaking her head.*) I’ve heard that Dr. Jeddler is thought to know more of it than he tells. Miss Grace has had letters from her sister, saying that she was well and happy, and made much happier by her being married to Mr. Alfred; and has written letters back. But there’s a mystery about her

life and fortunes, altogether, which nothing has cleared up to this hour, and which — (*She stops.*)

War. And which —

Mrs. B. (*Excitedly.*) Which only one other person, I believe, could explain.

War. Who may that be?

Mrs. B. (*With a shriek.*) Mr. Michael Warden! (*Rising.*) You remember me, sir? (*Trembling with emotion.*) I saw just now you did! You remember me, that night in the garden. I was with her!

War. Yes. You were.

Mrs. B. Yes, sir! Yes, to be sure. This is my husband, if you please. Ben, my dear Ben, run to Miss Grace — run to Mr. Alfred — run somewhere, Ben! Bring somebody here, directly!

War. (*Interposing between BRITAIN and the door.*) Stay! What would you do?

Mrs. B. Let them know that you are here, sir! Let them know that they may hear of her, from your own lips; let them know that she is not quite lost to them, but that she will come home again yet, to bless her father and her loving sister — even her old servant, even me — with a sight of her sweet face. Run, Ben, run! (*Pushes him towards the door, c. WARDEN checks him. MRS. BRITAIN runs past BRITAIN and seizes WARDEN'S cloak.*) Or, perhaps she's here now; perhaps she's close by. I think from your manner she is. Let me see her, sir, if you please. I waited on her when she was a little child. I saw her grow up to be the pride of all this place. I knew her when she was Mr. Alfred's promised wife. I tried to warn her when you tempted her away. I know

what her old home was when she was like the soul of it, and how it changed when she was gone and lost. Let me speak to her, if you please. (*He looks at her without speaking. A pause.*) I don't think she *can* know how truly they forgive her; how they love her; what joy it would be to them to see her once more. She may be timorous of going home. Perhaps if she sees me it may give her new heart. Only tell me truly, Mr. Warden, is she with you?

War. (*Shaking his head.*) She is not.

Mrs. B. Then she is dead! Poor Marion is dead!

[*She sits down, hides her face on the table, and weeps. BRITAIN tries to console her. Enter MR. SNITCHEY, C. D., hastily, and out of breath.*

Snit. (*Taking WARDEN aside.*) Good Heaven, Mr. Warden! what wind has blown — (*stops to take breath*) — you here?

War. An ill wind, I am afraid. If you could have heard what has just passed — how I have been besought and entreated to perform impossibilities — what confusion and affliction I carry with me!

Snit. I can guess it all. But why did you ever come here, my good sir?

War. Come! How should I know who kept the house? When I sent my servant on to you, I strolled in here because the place was new to me, and I had a natural curiosity in everything new and old in these old scenes; and it was outside the town I wanted to communicate with you first, before appearing there. I wanted to know what people would say to me. I see by your manner that you can tell me. If it were

not for your confounded caution, I should have been possessed of everything long ago.

Snit. Our caution! speaking for Self and Craggs — deceased. (*Glances at his hat-band and shakes his head.*) How can you reasonably blame us, Mr. Warden? It was understood betwen us that the subject was never to be renewed, and that it wasn't a subject on which grave and sober men like us (I made a note of your observations at the time) could interfere. Our caution, too! When Mr. Craggs, sir, went down to his respected grave in the full belief—

War. I had given a solemn promise of silence until I should return, whenever that might be, and I have kept it.

Snit. Well, sir, and I repeat it, we were bound to silence too. We were bound to silence in our duty towards ourselves, and in our duty towards a variety of clients, you among them, who were as close as wax. It was not our place to make inquiries of you on such a delicate subject. I had my suspicions, sir; but it is not six months since I have known the truth, and been assured that you lost her.

War. By whom?

Snit. By Dr. Jeddler himself, sir, who at last reposed that confidence in me voluntarily. He, and only he, has known the whole truth, years and years.

War. And you know it?

Snit. I do, sir! and I have also reason to know that it will be broken to her sister to-morrow evening. They have given her that promise. In the meantime, perhaps you'll give me the honor of your company at my house; being unexpected at your own. But, not

to run the chance of any more such difficulties as you have had here, in case you should be recognized — though you're a good deal changed; I think I might have passed you myself, Mr. Warden — we had better dine here, and walk on in the evening. It's a very good place to dine at, Mr. Warden; your own property, by-the-by. Self and Craggs (deceased) took a chop here sometimes, and had it very comfortably served. Mr. Craggs, sir, was struck off the roll of life too soon.

War. (*Pressing his hand to his forehead.*) Heaven forgive me for not condoling with you, but I'm like a man in a dream at present. I seem to want my wits. Mr. Craggs — yes — I am very sorry we have lost Mr. Craggs. (*Watches MR. and MRS. BRITAIN.*)

Snit. Mr. Craggs, sir, didn't find life, I regret to say, as easy to have and to hold as his theory made it out, or he would have been among us now. It's a great loss to me. He was my right arm, my right leg, my right ear, my right eye, was Mr. Craggs. I am paralytic without him. He bequeathed his share of the business to Mrs. Craggs, her executors, administrators, and assigns. His name remains in the Firm to this hour. I try, in a childish sort of way, to make believe, sometimes, that he's alive. You may observe that I speak for Self and Craggs — deceased, sir — deceased. (*Waving his handkerchief.*)

[WARDEN *whispers to* SNITCHEY.

Snit. (*Shaking his head.*) Ah, poor thing! Yes. She was always very faithful to Marion. She was always very fond of her. Pretty Marion! Poor Marion! (*Coming down c., to MRS. BRITAIN.*) Cheer

up, Mistress — you *are* married now, you know, Clemency. (MRS. BRITAIN *sighs and shakes her head.*) Well, well! Wait till to-morrow.

Mrs. B. (Sobbing.) To-morrow can't bring back the dead to life, Mister.

Snit. No. It can't do that, or it would bring back Mr. Craggs, deceased. But it may bring some soothing circumstances; it may bring some comfort. Wait till to-morrow!

[*Shakes her by the hand, and goes towards*
C. D. *Curtain.**

* MRS. BRITAIN, at table, L. C.; MR. BRITAIN standing near her; WARDEN, near C. D. SNITCHEY, C. D., holding the handle of the half-opened door, hat in hand, looking towards MRS. BRITAIN.

HOME AGAIN.

SCENE: Dr. Jeddler's Orchard. *Time, near sunset.*

ALFRED and GRACE seated together on the garden bench, L.; their little daughter playing near them.

Alfred. The time has flown, dear Grace, since then; and yet it seems a long while ago. We count by changes and events within us, not by years.

Grace. Yet we have years to count by, too, since Marion was with us. Six times, dear husband, counting to-night as one, we have sat here on her birthday, and spoken together of that happy return, so eagerly expected and so long deferred. Ah, when will it be! when will it be!

Alf. But Marion told you, in that farewell letter which she left for you upon your table, love, and which you read so often, that years must pass away before it *could* be. Did she not?

Grace. Yes.

Alf. That through those intervening years, however happy she might be, she would look forward to the time when you would meet again, and all would be made clear. The letter runs so, does it not, my dear?

Grace. Yes, Alfred.

Alf. And every other letter she has written since?

Grace. Except the last — some months ago — in which she spoke of you, and what you then knew, and what I was to learn to-night.

Alf. (*Looking at the sun.*) The appointed time was sunset.

Grace. Alfred, there was something in that letter — that old letter, which you say I read so often — that I have never told you. But to-night, dear husband, with that sunset drawing near, and all our life seeming to soften and become hushed with the departing day, I cannot keep it secret.

Alf. What is it, love?

Grace. When Marion went away, she wrote me, here, that you had once left her a sacred trust to me, and that now she left you, Alfred, such a trust in my hands; praying and beseeching me not to reject the affection she believed you would transfer to me when the new wound was healed, but to encourage and return it.

Alf. (*Taking her in his arms.*) — And make me a proud, and happy man again, Grace! Did she say so?

Grace. She meant, to make myself so blessed and honored in your love.

Alf. Hear me, my dear! (*She raises her head.*) No. Hear me so! (*Lays her head again on his shoulder.*) I know why I have never heard this passage in the letter until now. I know why no trace of it ever showed itself in any word or look of yours at that time. I know why Grace, although so true a friend to me, was hard to win to be my wife; and, knowing it, I know the priceless value of the heart I gird within my arms, and thank God for the rich possession. Look how golden and red the sun is!

Grace. (*Raising her head.*) Alfred, the sun is

going down. You have not forgotten what I am to know before it sets?

Alf. You are to know the truth of Marion's history, my love.

Grace. (*Imploringly.*) All the truth. Nothing veiled from me any more. That was the promise. Was it not?

Alf. It was.

Grace. Before the sun went down on Marion's birthday. And you see it, Alfred? It is sinking fast.

Alf. The truth is not reserved so long for me to tell, dear Grace. It is to come from other lips.

Grace. From other lips?

Alf. Yes. I know your constant heart; I know how brave you are; I know that to you a word of preparation is enough. You have said, truly, that the time is come. It is. Tell me that you have present fortitude to bear a trial — a surprise — a shock; and the messenger is waiting at the gate.

Grace. What messenger, and what intelligence does he bring?

Alf. I am pledged to say no more. Do you think you understand me?

Grace. I am afraid to think. Wait, Alfred! — one moment!

Alf. Courage, my wife! When you have firmness to receive the messenger, the messenger is waiting at the gate. The sun is setting on Marion's birthday. Courage, courage, Grace!

Grace. (*Looking at him.*) I am ready.

[*They rise. ALFRED goes into the house,*

R., leading the child; GRACE stands looking after them. DR. JEDDLER, clasping MARION in his arms, stands suddenly at the gate, c. GRACE turns; MARION breaks away from her father, runs to GRACE, and falls on her neck.

Grace. (Throwing her arms about MARION.) Oh, Marion, Marion! Oh, my sister! Oh, my heart's dear love! Oh, joy and happiness unutterable, so to meet again!

Mar. (After a pause.) When this was my dear home, Grace, as it will be now again —

Grace. Stay, my sweet love! A moment! O Marion, to hear you speak again!

Mar. When this was my dear home, Grace, as it will be now again, I loved him most devotedly. I would have died for him, though I was so young. I never slighted his affection in my secret breast, for one brief instant. Although it is so long ago, and past and gone, and everything is wholly changed, I could not bear to think that you, who loved so well, should think I did not truly love him once. I never loved him better, Grace, than when he left this very scene, upon this very day. I never loved him better, dear one, than I did that night when I left here. But he had gained, unconsciously, another heart, before I knew that I had one to give him. That heart — yours, my sister! — was so yielded up, in all its other tenderness, to me — was so devoted and so noble — that it plucked its love away, and kept its secret from all eyes but mine, and was content to sacrifice itself to me. But I knew something of its depths. I knew

the struggle it had made. I knew its high, inestimable worth to him, and his appreciation of it, let him love me as he would. I knew the debt I owed it. I had its great example every day before me. What you had done for me I knew that I could do, Grace, if I would, for you. And He who knows our hearts, my dearest, at this moment, and who knows there is no drop of bitterness or grief — of anything but unmixed happiness — in mine, enabled me to make the resolution that I never would be Alfred's wife. That he should be my brother and your husband, if the course I took could bring that happy end to pass; but that I never would (Grace, I then loved him dearly, dearly!) be his wife!

Grace. O Marion, O Marion!

Mar. I had tried to seem indifferent to him; but that was hard, and you were always his true advocate. I had tried to tell you of my resolution, but you would never hear me; you would never understand me. The time was drawing near for his return. I felt that I must act, before the daily intercourse between us was renewed. I knew that one great pang, undergone at that time, would save a lengthened agony to all of us. I knew that, if I went away then, that end must follow which *has* followed, and which has made us both so happy, Grace! I wrote to good Aunt Martha for a refuge in her house — I did not then tell her all, but something of my story — and she freely promised it. While I was contesting that step with myself, and with my love of you, and home, Mr. Warden, brought here by an accident, became, for some time, our companion.

Grace. I have sometimes feared, of late years, that this might have been. You never loved him, and you married him in your self-sacrifice to me!

Mar. He was then on the eve of going secretly away for a long time. He wrote to me, after leaving here, told me what his condition and prospects really were; and offered me his hand. He told me he had seen I was not happy in the prospect of Alfred's return. I believe he thought my heart had no part in that contract; perhaps thought I might have loved him once, and did not then; perhaps thought that when I tried to seem indifferent, I tried to hide indifference — I cannot tell. But I wished that you should feel me wholly lost to Alfred — hopeless to him — dead. Do you understand me, love? I saw Mr. Warden, and confided in his honor; charged him with my secret, on the eve of his and my departure. He kept it. Do you understand me, dear? (*GRACE looks confusedly upon her.* DR. JEDDLER, AUNT MARTHA, and ALFRED appear at gate, c., and stand there, unobserved by GRACE and MARION.) O Grace, dear Grace! if you were not a happy wife and mother — if I had no little namesake here — if Alfred, my kind brother, were not your own fond husband — from whence could I derive the ecstasy I feel to-night! But as I left here, so I have returned. My heart has known no other love; my hand has never been bestowed apart from it. I am still your maiden sister, unmarried, unbetrothed; your own old loving Marion, in whose affection you exist alone and have no partner, Grace!

[*GRACE embraces her, weeping.*

Aunt Mar. (*Coming down, and embracing GRACE and MARION.*) This is a weary day for me, for I lose my dear companion in making you all happy; and what can you give me in return for my Marion?

Dr. F. (*Coming down, c.*) A converted brother.

Aunt Mar. That's something, to be sure, in such a farce as —

Dr. F. (*Penitently.*) No, pray don't.

Aunt Mar. Well, I won't; but I consider myself ill-used. I don't know what's to become of me without my Marion, after we have lived together half a dozen years.

Dr. F. You must come and live here, I suppose. We shan't quarrel now, Martha.

Alf. Or you must get married, aunt.

Aunt Mar. Indeed, I think it might be a good speculation if I were to set my cap at Michael Warden, who, I hear, is come home much the better for his absence, in all respects. But as I knew him when he was a boy, and I was not a very young woman then, perhaps he mightn't respond. So I'll make up my mind to go and live with Marion when she marries, and until then (it will not be very long, I dare say) to live alone. What do *you* say, brother?

Dr. F. I've a great mind to say it's a ridiculous world altogether, and there's nothing serious in it.

Aunt Mar. You might take twenty affidavits of it, if you chose, Anthony; but nobody would believe you with such eyes as those.

Dr. F. (*Embracing his daughters.*) It's a world full of hearts, and a serious world, with all its folly — even with mine, which was enough to have swamped

the whole globe; and it is a world on which the sun never rises, but it looks upon a thousand bloodless battles that are some set-off against the miseries and wickedness of battle-fields; and it is a world we need be careful how we libel, Heaven forgive us, for it is a world of sacred mysteries, and its Creator only knows what lies beneath the surface of His lightest image!

Snit. (*Looking in at the gate.*) I beg your pardon, Doctor, but have I liberty to come in? (*Comes down, and kisses MARION'S hand.*) If Mr. Craggs had been alive, my dear Miss Marion, he would have had great interest in this occasion. It might have suggested to him, Mr. Alfred, that our life is not too easy, perhaps; that, taken altogether, it will bear any little smoothing we can give it; but Mr. Craggs was a man who could endure to be convinced, sir. He was always open to conviction. If he were open to conviction now, I—this is weakness. Mrs. Snitchey, my dear (*calling off*), you are among old friends.

[MRS. SNITCHEY *enters from house, R., crosses and congratulates the family; she then takes MR. SNITCHEY aside.*

Mrs. Snit. One moment, Mr. Snitchey. It is not in my nature to rake up the ashes of the departed.

Snit. No, my dear.

Mrs. Snit. Mr. Craggs is—

Snit. Yes, my dear, he is deceased.

Mrs. Snit. But I ask you if you recollect that evening of the ball? I only ask you that. If you do, and if your memory has not entirely failed you, Mr. Snitchey, and if you are not absolutely in your dotage,

I ask you to connect this time with that—to remember how I begged and prayed you, on my knees—

Snit. Upon your knees, my dear?

Mrs. Snit. Yes, and you know it—to beware of that man—to observe his eye,—and now tell me whether I was right, and whether at that moment he knew secrets which he didn't choose to tell.

Snit. (*In a low tone.*) Mrs. Snitchey—Madam. Did you ever observe anything in *my* eye?

Mrs. Snit. (*Sharply.*) No! Don't flatter yourself!

Snit. (*Twitching her sleeve.*) Because, ma'am, that night, it happens that we both knew secrets which we didn't choose to tell, and both knew just the same professionally. And so the less you say about such things the better, Mrs. Snitchey; and take this as a warning to have wiser and more charitable eyes another time. Miss Marion, I brought a friend of yours along with me. (*Calling off.*) Here! Mistress! (*Enter MRS. BRITAIN, R., with her apron to her eyes, and escorted by MR. BRITAIN. MARION starts towards her, but is checked by MR. SNITCHEY, who places himself between them.*) Now, Mistress, what's the matter with *you*?

Mrs. B. The matter?

[*Looks up, and sees MARION. She gives a scream, and MR. BRITAIN a roar. MRS. BRITAIN runs to MARION and embraces her, then to MR. SNITCHEY and embraces him, lastly to MR. BRITAIN; and then covers her face with her apron, and goes into hysterics. MR. WARDEN appears,*

and stands with downcast eyes at the gate, c. AUNT MARTHA sees him, and points him out to MARION. The two approach and converse with him.

Snit. (Drawing a document from his pocket.) Mr. Britain, I congratulate you. You are now the whole and sole proprietor of that freehold tenement, at present occupied and held by yourself as a licensed tavern, or house of public entertainment, and commonly called or known by the sign of the Nutmeg Grater. Your wife lost one house through my client, Mr. Michael Warden, and now gains another. (*Hands him the paper.*) I shall have the pleasure of canvassing you for the county, one of these fine mornings.

Brit. Would it make any difference in the vote if the sign was altered, sir?

Snit. Not in the least.

Brit. (Returning the paper.) Then just clap in the words, "and Thimble," will you be so good? and I'll have the two mottoes painted up in the parlor, instead of my wife's portrait.

War. (Coming down.) And let me claim the benefit of those inscriptions. Mr. Heathfield and Dr. Jeddler, I might have deeply wronged you both. That I did not, is no virtue of my own. I will not say that I am six years wiser than I was, or better. But I have known, at any rate, that term of self-reproach. I can urge no reason why you should deal gently with me. I abused the hospitality of this house, and learnt my own demerits, with a shame I never have forgotten, yet with some profit, too, I would fain hope, from one (*glancing at MARION*) to whom I made my

humble supplication for forgiveness, when I knew her merit and my deep unworthiness. In a few days I shall quit this place forever. I entreat your pardon. Do as you would be done by! Forget and forgive!

War.

●

Mrs. S. ● ● *Dr. F.*

Mr. S. ● ● *Marion.*

Mrs. B. ● ● *Grace.*

Mr. B. ● ● *Alfred.*

CURTAIN.

THE TWO CLUBS.



PART I. "MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK."

" II. "MR. WELLER'S WATCH."

THE TWO CLUBS.

MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK.

SCENE: Room in MASTER HUMPHREY'S House. *Table and two chairs, c.* MASTER HUMPHREY *alone, reading, c.* MR. PICKWICK *enters, L., hat in hand, and crosses to MASTER HUMPHREY, who rises to meet him.*

Mr. Pickwick. My dear sir, pray be seated. Pray sit down. Now, do not stand on my account. I must insist upon it, really. (*Presses him into his seat, and shakes him heartily by the hand.*)

Master Humphrey. Take a seat, sir. (MR. PICKWICK *sits near him.*)

Mr. P. You knew me directly. What a pleasure it is to think that you knew me directly!

Master H. I have read your adventures, sir, very often, and your features are quite familiar to me from the published portraits.

Mr. P. But don't you wonder how I found you out?

Master H. I shall never wonder, and, with your good leave, never know. It is enough for me that you give me this gratification. I have not the least desire that you should tell me by what means I have obtained it.

Mr. P. (*Shaking him again by the hand.*) You

are very kind. You are so exactly what I expected; but for what particular purpose do you think that I have sought you, my dear sir? Now what *do* you think I have come for? (MASTER H. *shakes his head.* MR. PICKWICK *lays his finger on MASTER H.'s coat sleeve, and throwing back his head, looks at him.*) What should you say if I confessed that, after reading your account of yourself and your little society, I had come here a humble candidate for one of the empty chairs in that society?

Master H. I should say that I know of only one circumstance which could still further endear that little society to me, and that would be the associating with it my old friend — for you must let me call you so — my old friend, Mr. Pickwick.

[MR. PICKWICK *seizes him by both hands, and shakes them heartily; drops them and pats him lightly on the back, then checks himself.*

Mr. P. My dear sir, I hope I have not hurt you.

Master H. Not in the least, Mr. Pickwick. But you have not told me anything about Sam Weller.

Mr. P. Oh! Sam is the same as ever. The same true, faithful fellow that he ever was. What should I tell you about Sam, my dear sir, except that he is more indispensable to my happiness and comfort every day of my life?

Master H. And Mr. Weller, senior?

Mr. P. Old Mr. Weller is in no respect more altered than Sam, unless it be that he is a little more opinionated than he was formerly, and perhaps a little more talkative. He spends a good deal of his time

now in our neighborhood, and has so far constituted himself a part of my body-guard, that when I ask permission for Sam to have a seat in your kitchen on clock nights (supposing your friends think me worthy to fill one of the chairs), I am afraid I must often include Mr. Weller, too. In fact, I left them both below when I came in, and will call them if you would like to see them.

Master H. Nothing could give me greater pleasure.

[*Exit MR. PICKWICK, L., and returns with MR. WELLER and SAM. MR. W. has his hat under his arm, and repeatedly salutes MASTER H., by touching his forehead with the fore finger of his right hand.*]

Master H. I am very glad to see you in such good health, Mr. Weller.

Mr. Weller. (L. c.) Why, thank'ee, sir, the axle ain't broke yet. We keeps up a steady pace — not too sewere, but vith a moderate degree o' friction — and the consekens is, that ve're still a runnin', and comes in to the time reg'lar. My son Samivel, sir, as you may have read on in history. (*SAM salutes.*) Samivel Veller, sir, has con-ferred upon me the ancient title o' grandfather wich had long laid dormouse, and was s'posed to be nearly hex-tinct in our family. Sammy, relate a anecdote o' vun o' them boys — that 'ere little anecdote about young Tony sayin' as he *would* smoke a pipe unbeknown to his mother.

Sam. (L.) Be quiet, can't you? I never see such a old magpie — never.

Mr. W. That 'ere Tony is the blessedest boy, —

the blessedest boy as ever *I* see in *my* days! Of all the charmin'est infants as ever I heerd tell on, includin' them as was kivered over by the robin redbreasts arter they'd committed soocide with blackberries, there never wos any like that 'ere little Tony. He's always a playin' vith a quart pot, that boy is! To see him a-settin' down on the door-step pretending to drink out of it, and fetchin a long breath arterwards, and smokin' a bit of firewood, and sayin', "Now I'm grandfather!" to see him a doin' that, at two year old, is better than any play as wos ever wrote. "Now I'm grandfather." (*Laughs.*) He wouldn't take a pint pot if you wos to make him a present on it; but he gets his quart, and then he says, "Now I'm grandfather!"

[*MR. W. laughs till he coughs. SAM seizes his shawl just under his chin, and shakes him vigorously, at the same time thumping him on the back. MR. W. recovers in a state of great exhaustion.*

Mr. P. (R. C.) He'll do now, Sam.

Sam. (*Looking reproachfully at MR. WELLER.*) He'll *do*, sir. Yes he *will* do, one o' these days. He'll do for his-self, and then he'll wish he hadn't. Did anybody ever see sich a inconsiderate old file — laughin into convulsions afore company, and stamping on the floor as if he'd brought his own carpet vith him, and wos under a wager to punch the pattern out in a given time! He'll begin again in a minute. (*MR. W. continues to laugh convulsively, but silently.*) There, — he's a goin' off — I said he would.

Mr. W. (*Recovering himself, and wiping his eyes with his coat sleeve.*) Afore ve vithdraws, there

is a pint, sir, respecting vich Sammy has a question to ask. Vile that question is a perwadin' this here conversation, p'r'aps the gen'l'm'n vill permit me to retire. (*Turns to go out.*)

Sam. (*Seizing him by the coat tail.*) Wot are you goin' away for?

Mr. W. I never see such a ondootiful boy as you, Samivel. Didn't you make a solemn promise, amountin' almost to a speeches o' *wow*, that you'd put that 'ere question on my account?

Sam. Well, I'm agreeable to do it; but not if you go cuttin' away like that. The fact is, sir (*to MASTER HUMPHREY*), that he wants to know somethin' respectin' that 'ere lady as is housekeeper here.

Master H. Ay, what is that?

Sam. (*Grinning.*) Vy, sir, he wishes to know vether she —

Mr. W. In short, vether that 'ere old creetur is, or is not, a widder. (*MR. P. and MR. H. laugh heartily.*)

Mr. H. My housekeeper, Mr. Weller, is a spinster.

Sam. There, now you're satisfied. You hear she's a spinster.

Mr. W. (*Scornfully.*) A wot.

Sam. A spinster.

Mr. W. (*Eyeing his son for a moment.*) Never mind vether she makes jokes or not, that's no matter. Wot I say is, is that 'ere female a widder, or is she not?

Sam. Wot do you mean by her making jokes?

Mr. W. (*Gravely.*) Never you mind, Samivel. Puns may be verry good things, or they may be verry

bad uns, and a female may be none the better, or she may be none the vurse for makin' of 'em; that's got nothin' to do vith vidders.

Sam. (*Looking round.*) Wy, now, would anybody believe as a man at his time o' life could be a running his head agin spinsters and punsters being the same thing?

Mr. W. There ain't a straw's difference between 'em. Your father didn't drive a coach for so many years, not to be ekal to his own langvidge, as far as *that* goes, Sammy.

Master H. I assure you, Mr. Weller, that the lady in question has never been married.

Mr. W. I am wery glad to hear it, sir. I wouldn't ha' asked the question, sir, but I wos greatly terrified by a widder not long ago, and my natural timidty's increased in consekens. It wos on the rail (*emphatically*); I wos a-goin' down to Birmingham by the rail, and I wos locked up in a close carriage vith a living widder. Alone we wos; the widder and me wos alone; and I believe it wos only because we *wos* alone, and there wos no clergyman in the conwayance, that that 'ere widder didn't marry me afore ve reached the half-way station. Ven I think how she began a-screaming, as we wos a-agoin' under them tunnels in the dark — how she kept on a faintin' and catchin' hold o' me — and how I tried to bust open the door as wos tight-locked, and perwented all escape. Ah! It wos a awful thing — most awful.

[*Much overcome, wipes his forehead several times with his sleeve.*]

Master H. Do you approve of railway communication, Mr. Weller?

Mr. W. (Wiping his brow before replying.)

I consider that the rail is unconstitootional and an in-waser o' priwileges. And as to the honor and dignity o' travellin', vere can that be vithout a coachman? and wot's the rail to sich coachmen and guards as is sometimes forced to go by it, but a outrage and a insult? As to the pace, wot sort o' pace do you think I, Tony Veller, could have kept a coach goin' at, for five hundred thousand pound a mile, paid in advance afore the coach wos on the road? And as to the ingein — a nasty, wheezin', creakin', gaspin', puffin', bustin' monster, always out o' breath, vith a shiny green and gold back, like a unpleasant beetle — as to the ingein, as is always a pourin' out red-hot coals at night, and black smoke in the day, the sensiblest thing it does, in my opinion, is, ven there's some-thin' in the vay, and it sets up that 'ere frightful scream, vich seems to say, "Now, here's two hundred and forty passengers in the verry greatest extremity o' danger, and here's their two hundred and forty screams in vun." [MASTER H. and MR. P. laugh heartily.

Mr. P. (To MASTER H.) And now, my dear sir, I must leave you, hoping to meet you and your friends at the next meeting of your society. (*Goes to L. U. E., and takes his overcoat from a chair on which he laid it as he entered.*) Now, Sam!

Mr. W. (Taking MR. P.'s coat from him.) All right, sir. Hold hard, sir. Right arm fust — now the left — now one strong conwulsion, and the great coat's on, sir.

[SAM aids MR. W., and together they put the coat on, with much tugging. MR.

W. goes out, L., and returns with a lantern, which he had left just outside the door.

Mr. W. Lamps alight, sir?

Mr. P. I think not, to-night.

Mr. W. Then if this here gen'l'm'n (*to MASTER H.*) vill per-mit, we'll leave it here, ready for our next journey. This here lantern, sir (*holds it up*), vunce belonged to the celebrated Bill Blinder, as is now at grass, as all on us vill be in our turns. Bill, sir, vos the hostler as had charge o' them two vell-known piebald leaders that run in the Bristol fast coach, and vould never go to no other tune but a suth-erly vind and a cloudy sky, wich vos consekently played incessant by the guard wenever they vos on duty. He vos took verry bad one arternoon, arter having been off his feed, and verry shaky on his legs for some veeks; and he says to his mate, "Matey," he says, "I think I'm goin' the wrong side o' the post, and that my foot's verry near the bucket. Don't say I ain't, for I know I am; and don't let me be interrupted, for I've savèd a little money, and I'm a-goin' into the stable to make my last vill and testymint." "I'll take care as nobody interrupts," says his mate; "but you on'y hold up your head, and shake your ears a bit, and you're good for twenty years to come." Bill Blinder makes him no answer, but he goes away into the stable, and there he soon arterwards lays himself down a'tween the two piebalds, and dies — previously a writin' outside the corn-chest: "This the last vill and testymint of Villiam Blinder." They vos nat'rally verry much amazed at this, and arter looking among

the litter, and up in the loft, and vere not, they opens the corn-chest, and finds that he'd been and chalked his vill inside the lid ; so the lid was obligated to be took off the hinges, and sent up to Doctor Commons, to be proved ; and under that 'ere wery instrument this here lantern was passed to Tony Veller, vich circumstance, sir, gives it a wally in my eyes, and makes me rek-vest, if you vill be so kind as to take partickler care on it.

Master H. (Laughing.) I will see that the best possible care is taken of it, Mr. Weller.

Mr. W. Thank'ee sir. (*Deposits lantern in corner.*)

[*MR. P. and MASTER H., laughing, shake hands. H. accompanies P. to the door.*

Exit P., followed closely by MR. W. and SAM, who bow themselves out. Curtain.

MR. WELLER'S WATCH.

SCENE: Miss Benton's Parlor. *Table in centre; on it an ale jug and glasses; several new pipes; a supply of tobacco; eatables displayed on the dresser; chairs and stools about the room.* MISS B. *sitting alone.* Tap at door. MR. WELLER *opens it and looks in.*

Mr. Weller. Good ev'nin', mum. I'm afeerd we've come in rayther arter the time, mum, but the young colt bein' full o' wice, has been a boltin' and shyin', and gettin' his leg over the traces to sich a extent that if he ain't wery soon broke in, he'll wex me into a broken heart, and then he'll never be brought out no more except to learn his letters from the writin' on his grandfather's tombstone. (*Enters, leading young TONY, who has a very small whip in his hand; TONY stops, and standing with his legs wide apart, winks at Miss B. MR. W. is delighted.*) There's a naughty boy, mum; there's a immoral Tony. Was there ever a little chap o' four year and eight months old, as vinked his eye at a strange lady afore?

Tony. (*Snapping his whip and addressing Miss B.*) Ya — hip! Going down the road? (*MR. W., delighted, gives him a penny.*)

Mr. W. It's in wain to deny it, mum; this here is a boy arter his grandfather's own heart, and beats out all the boys as ever wos or will be. Though at the same time, mum (*looking gravely at TONY*), it was wery wrong on him to want to *over* all the posts as we cum along, and wery cruel on him to force poor

grandfather to lift him cross-legged over every vun of 'em. He wouldn't pass one single blessed post, mum; and at the top o' the lane there's seven and forty on 'em all in a row, and wery close together. (*Bursts into a fit of laughter, but checks himself, and says gravely.*) Little boys as make their grandfathers put 'em over posts, never go to heaven at any price.

Miss B. (*Patting TONY on the head.*) He's the finest little boy I ever saw.

Mr. W. Wy, mum, I don't think you'll see a many sich, and that's the truth. But if my son Samivel would give me my vay, mum, and only dispense with his, — *might* I wenter to say the vurd?

Miss B. What word, Mr. Weller?

Mr. W. *Petticuts*, mum. (*Lays his hands on TONY's dress.*) If my son Samivel, mum, would only dispense with these here, you'd see such a alteration in his appearance, as the imagination can't depicter.

Miss B. But what would you have the child wear instead, Mr. Weller?

Mr. W. I've offered my son Samivel, mum, agen and agen, to purvide him, at my own cost, vith a suit o' clothes as 'ud be the makin' on him, and form his mind in infancy for those pursuits as I hope the family o' the Vellers vill always dewote themselves to. Tony, my boy, tell the lady wot them clothes air, as grandfather says father ought to let you veare.

Tony. (*Promptly and without stops.*) A little white hat and a little sprig weskut and little knee cords and little top-boots and a little green coat with little bright buttons and a little welwet collar. *

Mr. W. (*Proudly.*) That's the costoom, mum.

Once make sich a model on him as that, and you'd say he *wos* a angel.

[Miss B. *coughs doubtfully, and a silence ensues.*

Miss B. (To TONY.) How many brothers and sisters have you, my dear?

Tony. (Taking a seat by her.) One brother and no sister at all. Sam his name is and so's my father's. Do you know my father?

Miss B. O, yes, I know him.

Tony. Is my father fond of you?

Miss B. I hope so.

Tony. (Considering.) Is my grandfather fond of you?

Miss B. (In confusion.) Really, children *do* ask such extraordinary questions! It is the most difficult thing in the world to talk to them.

Mr. W. I'm verry fond o' the lady, my boy.

Miss B. (Looking another way.) La, Mr. Weller, don't be putting such things into the child's head.

Mr. W. (Shaking his head.) It's verry wrong in little boys to make game o' their grandfather, ain't it, mum? (Sitting down.)

Miss B. O, very sad! But I hope no little boys do that.

Mr. W. There's vun Turk, mum, as havin' seen his grandfather a little overcome vith drink on the occasion of a friend's birthday, goes a-reelin' and staggerin' about the house, and makin' believe that he's the old gen'l'm'n.

Miss B. O, quite shocking!

Mr. W. Yes, mum, and prevously to so doin', this

here young traitor that I'm a speakin' of, pinches his little nose to make it red, and then he gives a hiccup, and says, "I'm all right," he says, "Give us another song!" Ha, ha! "Give us another song," he says. Ha, ha, ha!

Tony. (*Kicking up his legs and laughing.*) That was me, that was.

Mr. W. (*Very solemnly.*) No, Tony, not you. I hope it warn't you, Tony. It must ha' been that 'ere naughty little chap as comes sometimes out o' the empty watch-box round the corner — that same little chap as wos found standing on the table afore the looking-glass, pretending to shave himself vith a oyster-knife.

Miss B. He didn't hurt himself. I hope.

Mr. W. (*Proudly.*) Not he, mum. Bless your heart, you might trust that 'ere boy vith a steam engein a'most, he's such a knowin' young — (*Stops suddenly and groans*), it was all wery shocking — wery. O, he's a bad 'un, is that 'ere watch-box boy, makin' such a noise and litter in the back yard, waterin' wooden horses, and feedin' ov 'em with grass, and perpetivally spillin' his little brother out of a veelbarrow, and frightenin' his mother out of her wits, oh — he's a bad 'un. He's even gone so far as to put on a pair o' paper spectacles, as he got his father to make for him, and walk up and down the garden vith his hands behind him, in imitation ov Mr. Pickwick — but Tony don't do sich things, oh, no!

Tony. Oh, no!

Mr. W. He knows better — he does. He knows that if he wos to come sich games as these, nobody

wouldn't love him, and that his grandfather, in partikler, couldn't a-bear the sight ov him; for vich reasons Tony's always good.

Tony. Always good!

[*MR. W. takes him on his knee and kisses him; points to TONY and winks at MISS B., to signify that HE was the watch-box boy referred to. Door, L. opens, and SAM enters; soon after, enter, L., MR. SLITHERS, the barber; MISS B. introduces; MR. W. puts TONY down. He plays about the room, and at last goes to sleep in an arm-chair.*

Miss. B. Mr. Slithers, gentlemen, will assist me in the responsible office of entertaining my distinguished visitors. Indeed, without Mr. Slithers, I should be placed in quite an awkward situation.

Mr. W. (Politely.) There's no call for any hock'erdness, mum; no call wotsumever. A lady *can't* be hock'erd. Natur has otherwise purwided.

[*Miss B. smiles sweetly.*

Mr. S. (Rubbing his hands.) Hear! Hear! Very true, sir. [All sit.

Sam. (Turning and fixing his eyes on MR. S.) I never knew but vun o' your trade, sir; but *he* was worth a dozen, and was indeed dewoted to his callin'!

Mr. S. Was he in the easy-shaving way, sir, or in the cutting and curling line?

Sam. Both. Easy shavin' was his natur, and cuttin' and curlin' was his pride and glory. His whole delight was in his trade. His name was Jinkinson. Well, vun day he was took wery ill with some in'nard

disorder, lost the use of his legs, and was confined to his bed, vere he laid a wery long time. Vun day, the doctor happenin' to say, "I shall look in as usual to-morrow mornin', Jinkinson catches hold of his hand, and says, "Doctor," he says, "will you grant me one favor?" "I will, Jinkinson," says the doctor. "Then, doctor," says Jinkinson, "vill you come unshaved, and let me shave you?" "I will," says the doctor. "God bless you," says Jinkinson. Next day the doctor came, and arter he'd been shaved all skilful and reg'lar, he says, "Jinkinson," he says, "it's wery plain this does you good. Now," he says, "I've got a coachman as has got a beard that it 'ud warm your heart to work on; and though the footman," he says, "hasn't got much of a beard, still he's a tryin' it on vith a pair o' viskers to that extent that razors is Christain charity. If they take it in turns to mind the carriage wen it's a waitin' below," he says, "wot's to hinder you from operatin' on both of 'em ev'ry day, as well as on me? You've got six children," he says; "wot's to hinder you from shavin' all their heads, and keepin' 'em shaved? You've got two assistants in the shop down stairs; wot's to hinder you from cuttin' and curlin' them as often as you like? Do this," he says, "and you're a man agin." Jinkinson squeedged the doctor's hand and begun that wery day; he kept his tools upon the bed, and wenever he felt his-self gettin' worse, he turned to at vun o' the children who was a runnin' about the house vith heads like clean Dutch cheeses, and shaved him agin. Vun day the lawyer come to make his vill; all the time he was a takin' it down, Jinkinson was secretly a-clippin' away at his hair with a large pair of scis-

sors. "Wot's that 'ere snippin' noise," says the lawyer, every now and then; "it's like a man havin' his hair cut." "It *is* verry like a man havin' his hair cut," says poor Jinkinson, hidin' the scissors, and lookin' quite innocent. By the time the lawyer found it out, he was verry nearly bald. Jinkinson vos kept alive in this vay for a long time, but at last vun day he has in all the children, vun arter another, shaves each on 'em verry clean, and gives him vun kiss on the crown o' his head; then he has in the two assistants, and arter cuttin' and curlin' of 'em in the first style of elegance, says he feels quite happy in his mind, and vishes to be left alone; and then he dies, prevously cuttin' his own hair, and makin' one flat curl in the verry middle of his forehead. (*Takes a pipe and fills it.*)

Mr. W. (*Whispering to SAM.*) Sammy, do you think I've gone too fur?

Sam. Wot do you mean by too fur?

Mr. W. In that 'ere little compliment respectin' the want of hock'erdness in ladies.

Sam. You don't think she's fallen in love with you in consekens o' that, do you?

Mr. W. More unlikelier things have come to pass, my boy. I'm always afeerd of inadwertent captiwa-tion, Sammy. If I know'd how to make myself ugly or unpleasent, I'd do it, Samivel, rayther than live in this here state of perpetival terror. (*They place themselves at table. MR. W. takes a pipe, fills it, and prepares to light it, but puts it down again.*) As to imbibin' any o' this here flagrant veed, mum, in the presence of a lady (*lays down the pipe*), it couldn't be. Samivel, total abstinence, if *you* please.

Miss B. But I like it of all things

Mr. W. (*Shaking his head.*) No — no.

Miss B. Upon my word I do. *Mr. Slithers* knows
I do. [MR. S. *nods.*

Mr. W. (*Feebly.*) No.

[*Takes up pipe again.* *Miss B.* lights a piece of paper, and insists on holding it to his pipe. He resists.

Miss B. But my fingers will be burnt.

[MR. W. yields, and she lights the pipe. MR. W. takes a long puff, and looks smilingly upon *Miss B.*; but, suddenly recollecting himself, turns and looks sternly at the candle.

Sam. I don't think that, if the lady was agreeable, it 'ud be verry far out o' the vay for us four to make up a club of our own, like the governors does up stairs, and let *him* (*pointing with his pipe to his father*) be the president.

Miss B. The very thing. Just what I was thinking of.

Mr. S. And I, too.

[MR. W. lays down his pipe, unbuttons the lower buttons of waistcoat, pauses and takes breath, seizes his watch-chain, and slowly drags from his fob an immense silver watch, which brings the pocket with it. He winds it up with a large key, applies it to his ear, gives it a half dozen hard raps on the table, and lays it down, face upwards.

Mr. W. That is the title and emblem o' this 'ere

society. Sammy, reach them two stools this vay, for the vacant cheers. Ladies and gen'l'men, Mr. Weller's watch is vound up and now a goin'. Order! (*Raps the table with his watch.*) Nothing hurts it, ladies and gen'l'men. Falls and concussions of all kinds rayther improve it. (*Raps again.*) And now the assosiashun is formally constitooted, — and don't let's have no grinnin' at the cheer, Samivel, or I shall be committin' you to the cellar, and then p'r'aps we may get into wot the 'Merikins call a fix, and the English a qvestion o' privileges. (*Settles himself with dignity in his chair.*) Samivel, relate an anecdote.

Sam. (*Turning to Mr. S.*) We wos a talkin' jist now, sir, about barbers. Pursuin' that 'ere fruitful theme, sir, I'll tell you in a verry few words a romantic little story about another barber as p'r'aps you may never have heerd.

Mr. W. Samivel! (*Rapping with his watch.*) Address your observations to the cheer, sir, and not to priwate individuals.

Mr. S. (*Rising and leaning over the table.*) And if I might rise to order, I would suggest that *barbers* is not exactly the kind of language which is agreeable and soothing to our feelings. You, sir, will correct me if I am wrong, but I believe there *is* such a word in the dictionary as *hair-dressers*.

Sam. Well, but suppose he *wasn't* a hair-dresser?

Mr. W. Wy, then, sir, be parliamentary, and call him vun, all the more. In the same vay as ev'ry gen'l'man, in another place, is a *Honorable*, ev'ry barber, in this place, is a hair-dresser. Ven you read the speeches in the papers, and see as vun gen'l'man

says of another, "The *Honorable* member, if he vill allow me to call him so," you vill understand, sir, that that means, "If he vill allow me to keep up that 'ere pleasant and uniwersal fiction."

[SAM gazes in admiration upon his father. and gives a long whistle. MR. W. chuckles.

Sam. Here's the story. Vunce upon a time there wos a young hair-dresser as opened a verry smart little shop, vith four wax dummies in the winder, two gen'l'men and two ladies, — the gen'l'men vith blue dots for their beards, verry large viskers, ou-dacious heads of hair, uncommon clear eyes, and nostrils of amazin' pinkness — the ladies vith their heads o' one side, and their right forefingers on their lips. This here young hair-dresser wos so proud o' them dummies that he wos constantly a runnin' out in the road to look at 'em, and constantly a runnin' in again to touch up and polish. Vun o' these dummies wos a fav'rite vith him beyond the others; and ven any of his acquaintance asked him wy he didn't get married — as the young ladies he knowed, in partick'ler, often did — he used to say, "Never! I never vill enter into the bonds of vedlock," he says, "until I meet vith a young 'ooman as realizes my idea o' that 'ere fairest dummy vith the light hair. Then and not till then, I vill approach the altar!" All the young ladies he know'd, as had got dark hair, told him this wos verry sinful, and that he wos wurshippin' a idle; but them as wos at all near the same shade as the dummy, colored up verry much, and wos observed to think him a verry nice young man.

Mr. W. (Gravely.) Samivel, a member o' this assosiashun bein' one o' that 'ere tender sex which is now immedety referred to, I have to rekvest that you vill make no reflections.

Sam. I ain't a makin' any, am I?

Mr. W. (Severely.) Order, sir! (*In his usual tone.*) Samivel, drive on!

Sam. The young hair-dresser hadn't been in the habit o' makin' this awowal above six months, ven he encountered a young lady as wos the wery pictur o' the fairest dummy. "Now," he says, "it's all up. I am a slave!" The young lady wos not only the pictur o' the fairest dummy, but she was wery romantic, as the young hair-dresser was, too; and he says, "Oh," he says, "here's a community o' feelin'; here's a flow o' soul," he says; "here's a interchange o' sentiment." The young lady didn't say much, o' course; but she expressed herself agreeable, and shortly arterwards vent to see him vith a mutual friend. The hair-dresser rushes out to meet her, but d'rectly she sees the dummies she changes color, and falls a trembling wiolently. "Look up, my love," says the hair-dresser; "behold your imige in my winder, but not correcter than in my 'art!" "My imige?" she says. "Your'n," replies the hair-dresser. "But whose imige is that?" she says, a p'intin' at vun o' the gen'l'men. "No vun's, my love," he says; "it is but a idea." "A idea!" she cries; "it is a portrait, I feel it is a portrait, and that 'ere noble face must be in the milingtary!" "Wot do I hear?" says he, a crumplin' his curls. "Villiam Gibbs," she says, quite firm, "never renoo the subject. I respect you as a friend, but my

affections is set upon that manly brow." "This," says the hair-dresser, "is a reg'lar blight, and in it I perceive the hand of Fate. Farevell!" Vith these vurds, he rushes into the shop, breaks the dummy's nose vith a blow of his curlin' irons, melts him down at the parlor fire, and never smiles arterwards

Miss B. The young lady, Mr. Weller?

Sam. Why, ma'am, finding that Fate had a spite agin her, and everybody she come into contact vith, she never smiled neither, but read a deal o' poetry, and passed away — by rayther slow degrees, for she ain't dead yet.

Mr. S. That is one of the most interesting stories I ever heard.

Miss B. Very interesting, indeed.

Sam. (To MR. S.) Are you a married man, sir?

Mr. S. I have not that honor.

Sam. I s'pose you mean to be?

Mr. S. Well (*rubbing his hands*), I don't know. I don't think it's very likely.

Sam. That's a bad sign. If you'd said you meant to be vun o' these days, I should ha' looked upon you as bein' safe. You're in a very precarious state.

Mr. S. I'm not conscious of any danger, at all events.

Mr. W. No more wos I, sir. Those vere my symptoms, exactly. I've been took that vay twice. Keep your vether eye open, my friend, or you're gone. (*A silence. Miss B. sighs.*) Is there anythin' wery piercin' in that 'ere little heart, mum?

Miss B. (*Laughing.*) Dear me, Mr. Weller!

Mr. W. No, but *is* there anythin' as agitates it?

Has it always been obderate, — always opposed to the happiness o' human creeturs? Eh, has it? (Miss B., *in confusion, discovers that the jug is empty, and, taking it, hurries out of the room, R., followed by MR. S., who insists on carrying the candle. MR. W. looks smilingly after Miss B., and disdainfully after MR. S.; then, surveying the room, his eye falls upon SAM.*) Sammy, I mistrust that barber.

Sam. Wot for? Wot's he got to do vith you? You're a nice man, you are! Arter pretendin' all kinds o' terror, to go a payin' compliments, and talkin' about hearts and piercers!

Mr. W. (*Choking with laughter.*) Wos I a talkin' about hearts and piercers? Wos I though, Sammy, eh?

Sam. Wos you? Of course you wos.

Mr. W. She don't know no better, Sammy. There ain't no harm in it—no danger, Sammy; she's only a punster. She seemed pleased, though, didn't she? O' course she wos pleased. It's nat'ral she should be—wery nat'ral.

Sam. (*Laughing.*) He's wain of it! He's actually wain!

Mr. W. Hush! they're a comin' back—the little heart's a comin' back. But mark these wurds o' mine once more, and remember 'em ven your father says he said 'em: Samivel, I mistrust that 'ere deceitful barber.

[*Curtain.*]

PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE.

PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE.

“A LITERARY MAN.”

SCENE: A Street Corner. *Enter* SILAS WEGG.

(See Index.) *He carries a “chair, a covered clothes-horse, a pair of trestles, a board, a basket, and an umbrella, all strapped together.” Separating them, he makes, near a lamp-post, a counter of the board and trestles; takes from the basket fruits, &c., for sale, and spreads them on the counter; places the clothes-horse as a screen, to protect him against the wind; fastens on this screen a quantity of penny ballads; opens his umbrella and puts it up over the table; in front of counter, he hangs a placard, fastened to a board; puts stool behind the counter, and basket under it; sits down, with his back against the lamp-post, and his feet in the basket.*

| |
|---------------------------------|
| Errands gone |
| On with fi |
| Delity By |
| Ladies & Gentlemen |
| I remain |
| Your Humble Serv ^t . |
| Silas Wegg. |

[N. B. All this can be arranged before the curtain rises, if preferred.]

Wegg. (Looking off.) O! Here you are again!
(*Musingly.*) And what are you now? Are you in the Funns, or where are you? Have you lately come

to settle in this neighborhood, or do you own another neighborhood? Are you in independent circumstances, or is it wasting the motions of a bow on you? Come! I'll speculate! I'll invest a bow in you.
(*Rises and bows, as BOFFIN enters, R.*)

Boffin. Morning, sir! Morning! Morning!

Wegg. (*Aside.*) Calls me, *sir!* He won't answer. A bow gone!

Bof. (*Crossing stage.*) Morning, morning, morning!

Wegg. (*Aside.*) Appears to be rather a 'arty old cock, too. (*To BOFFIN.*) Good morning to *you*, sir.

Bof. (*Stopping before the stall.*) Do you remember me, then!

Wegg. I have noticed you go past our house, sir, several times in the course of the last week or so.

Bof. Our house. Meaning — (*Points off.*)

Wegg. (*Nodding.*) Yes.

Bof. Oh! (*Inquisitively.*) Now, what, — what do they allow you, now?

Wegg. (*Dryly.*) It's job-work that I do for our house. It's not yet brought to an exact allowance.

Bof. Oh! It's not yet brought to an allowance? No! It's not yet brought to an exact allowance. Oh! Morning, morning, morning! (*Walks off.*)

Wegg. Appears to be rather a cracked old cock.

Bof. (*Returning.*) How did you get your wooden leg?

Wegg. (*Tartly.*) In an accident.

Bof. Do you like it?

Wegg. Well; — I — I haven't got to keep it warm

Bof. (*Hugging his stick.*) He hasn't — he hasn't

got — ha! ha! — to keep it warm! Did you ever hear of the name of Boffin?

Wegg. No. I never did hear of the name of Boffin.

Bof. Do you like it?

Wegg. (*Desperately.*) Why, no. I can't say I do.

Bof. Why don't you like it?

Wegg. I don't know why I don't; but I don't at all.

Bof. (*Smiling.*) Now, I'll tell you something that will make you sorry for that. My name's Boffin.

Wegg. I can't help it. (*Aside.*) And if I could, I wouldn't.

Bof. (*Smiling.*) But there's another chance for you. Do you like the name of Nicodemus? Think it over. Nick, or Noddy.

Wegg. (*Sitting down resignedly.*) It is not, sir, a name as I could wish any one that I had a respect for to call *me* by; but there may be persons that would not view it with the same objections. I don't know why.

Bof. Noddy Boffin — Noddy, that's my name. Noddy — or Nick — Boffin. What's your name?

Wegg. Silas Wegg. I don't know why Silas, and I don't know why Wegg.

Bof. (*Hugging his stick closer.*) Now, Wegg, I want to make a sort of offer to you. Do you remember when you first see me?

Wegg. (*Meditating.*) Let me think. I ain't quite sure, and yet I generally take a powerful sight of notice, too. Was it on a Monday morning, when the butcher-boy had been to our house for orders, and

bought a ballad of me, which, being unacquainted with the tune, I run it over to him?

Bof. Right, Wegg, right! But he bought more than one.

Wegg. Yes, to be sure, sir; he bought several, and wishing to lay out his money to the best, he took my opinion to guide his choice, and we went over the collection together. To be sure we did. Here was him as it might be, and here was myself as it might be, and there was you, Mr. Boffin, as you identically are, with your self-same stick under your very same arm, and your very same back to us. To — be — sure! Your wery self-same back.

Bof. What do you think I was doing, Wegg?

Wegg. I should judge, sir, that you might be glancing your eye down the street.

Bof. No, Wegg. I was a-listening.

Wegg. (*Dubiously.*) Was you, indeed?

Bof. Not in a dishonorable way, Wegg, because you was singing to the butcher; and you wouldn't sing secrets to a butcher in the street, you know.

Wegg. It never happened that I did so yet, to the best of my remembrance. But I might do it. A man can't say what he might wish to do some day or another.

Bof. Well, I was a-listening to you and to him. And what do you — you haven't got another stool, have you? I'm rather thick in my breath.

Wegg. (*Giving up his stool.*) I haven't got another, but you're welcome to this. It's a treat to me to stand.

Bof. Lard! (*Sits behind counter.*) It's a pleas-

ant place, this! (*Looks about.*) And then to be shut in on each side with these ballads, like so many book-leaf blinkers! Why, it's delightful!

Wegg. (*Bending over counter.*) If I am not mistaken, sir, you alluded to some offer or another that was on your mind?

Bof. I'm coming to it! All right. I'm coming to it! I was going to say that when I listened that morning, I listened with hadmiration amounting to haw. I thought to myself, "Here's a man with a wooden leg — a literary man with —"

Wegg. N — not exactly so, sir.

Bof. Why, you know every one of these songs by name and by tune, and if you want to read or to sing any one on 'em off' straight, you've only to whip on your spectacles and do it! I see you at it!

Wegg. Well, sir, we'll say literary, then.

Bof. A literary man — *with* a wooden leg — and all Print is open to him! That's what I thought to myself, that morning. (*Rising and describing a large circle with his arm.*) All Print is open to him! And it is — ain't it?

Wegg. (*Modestly.*) Why, truly, sir. I believe you couldn't show me the piece of English print, that I wouldn't be equal to collaring and throwing.

Bof. On the spot?

Wegg. On the spot.

Bof. I know'd it! Then consider this. Here am I, a man without a wooden leg, and yet all print is shut to me.

Wegg. (*Complacently.*) Indeed, sir? Education neglected?

Bof. (*With emphasis.*) Neg-lected! That ain't no word for it. I don't mean to say but what if you showed me a B, I could so fur give you change for it, as to answer Boffin.

Wegg. Come, come, sir, that's something too.

Bof. It's something, but I'll take my oath it ain't much.

Wegg. Perhaps it's not as much as could be wished by an inquiring mind, sir.

Bof. Now, look here. I'm retired from business. Me and Mrs. Boffin — Henerietty Boffin — which her father's name was Henery, and her mother's name was Hetty, and so you get it — we live on a compittance, under the will of a diseased governor.

Wegg. Gentleman dead, sir?

Bof. Man alive, don't I tell you? A diseased governor? Now, it's too late for me to begin shovelling and sifting at alphabeds and grammar-books. I'm getting to be a old bird, and I want to take it easy. But I want some reading — some fine bold reading, some splendid book in a gorging Lord-Mayor's-Show of wollumes, as'll reach right down your pint of view, and take time to go by you. How can I get that reading, Wegg? By (*tapping him on the breast with the head of his stick*) paying a man truly qualified to do it, so much an hour (say twopence) to come and do it.

Wegg. Hem! Flattered, sir, I am sure. Hem! This is the offer you mentioned, sir?

Bof. Yes. Do you like it?

Wegg. I am considering of it, Mr. Boffin.

Bof. I don't want to tie a literary man — *with a*

wooden leg — down too tight. A halfpenny an hour sha'n't part us. The hours are your own to choose, after you've done for the day with your house here. I live over Maiden Lane way — out Holloway direction — and you've only got to go East-and-by-North when you've finished here, and you're there. Twopence halfpenny an hour. (*Takes a piece of chalk from his pocket, gets off the stool, and proceeds to work out the sum on the top of it.*) Two long'un and a short'un — twopence halfpenny; two short'uns is a long'un, and two two long'uns is four long'uns — making five long'uns; six nights a week at five long'uns a night (*scoring them all down separately*), and you mount up to thirty long'uns. A round'un! Half a crown!

[*Points to the stool; then rubs off the chalk and sits down again.*]

Wegg. (*Meditating.*) Half a crown! Yes. (It ain't much, sir.) Half-a-crown.

Bof. Per week, you know.

Wegg. (*Musing.*) Per week. Yes. As to the amount of strain upon the intellect, now. Was you thinking at all of poetry?

Bof. Would it come dearer?

Wegg. It would come dearer. For when a person comes to grind off poetry night after night, it is but right he should expect to be paid for its weakening effect on the mind.

Bof. To tell you the truth, *Wegg*, I wasn't thinking of poetry, except in so fur as this:—If you was to happen now and then to feel yourself in the mind to tip me and Mrs. Boffin one of your ballads, why then we should drop into poetry.

Wegg. I follow you, sir. But not being a regular musical professional, I should be loath to engage myself for that; and therefore when I dropped into poetry, I should ask to be considered so far in the light of a friend.

Bof. (*Shaking him by the hand.*) Very kind of you, indeed, Wegg, and much more than I could have asked. What do you think of the terms, Wegg?

Wegg. Mr. Boffin, I never bargain.

Bof. (*Admiringly.*) So I should have thought of you!

Wegg. No, sir. I never did 'aggle, and I never will 'aggle. Consequently I meet you at once, free and fair, with — Done, for double the money!

Bof. (*A little staggered.*) Well, you know better what it ought to be than I do, Wegg, so we'll consider it settled. Could you begin to-night, Wegg?

Wegg. Yes, sir. I see no difficulty if you wish it. You are provided with the needful implement — a book, sir.

Bof. Bought him at a sale. Eight wollumes. Red and gold. Purple ribbon in every wollume, to keep the place where you leave off. Do you know him?

Wegg. The book's name, sir?

Bof. (*Disappointed.*) I thought you might have knowed him without it. His name is (*speaking slowly*) Decline-and Fall-Off The-Rooshan-Empire.

Wegg. (*Nodding.*) Ay! indeed!

Bof. You know him, Wegg?

Wegg. (*L. of counter.*) I haven't been not to say right slap through him, very lately, having been other

ways employed, Mr. Boffin. But know him? Old familiar declining and falling off the Rooshan? Rather, sir! Ever since I was not so high as your stick. Ever since my eldest brother left our cottage to enlist into the army. On which occasion, as the ballad that was made about it describes, (*recites oratorically*) —

Beside that cottage door, Mr. Boffin,
 A girl was on her knees;
 She held aloft a snowy scarf, sir,
 Which (my eldest brother noticed) fluttered
 in the breeze.

[MR. B. *rises and comes out, R. of counter.*

She breathed a prayer for him, Mr. Boffin;
 A prayer he could not hear.
 And my eldest brother lean'd upon his sword,
 Mr. Boffin,
 And wiped away a tear.

Bof. (*Shaking hands with W.*) Name your hour, Mr. Wegg.

Wegg. (*Front of counter.*) Call it eight, Mr. Boffin.

Bof. (c.) Where I live, is called the Bower. Boffin's Bower is the name Mrs. Boffin christened it when we come into it as a property. If you should meet with anybody that don't know it by that name (which hardly anybody does), when you've got nigh upon about a odd mile, or say and a quarter if you like, up Maiden Lane, Battle Bridge, ask for Har-

mony Jail, and you'll be put right. I shall expect you, Wegg (*claps him on the shoulder*), most joyfully. I shall have no peace or patience till you come. Print is now opening ahead of me. This night, a literary man, *with* a wooden leg (*looks admiringly at W.'s leg*), will begin to lead me a new life! My fist again, Wegg. Morning, morning, morning!

[*Exit B. ; curtain.*]

BOFFIN'S BOWER.

SCENE: A Large Room; L., a fireplace; R., a door; at back, curtained windows; on each side of fireplace a wooden settle; in front of each settle, a small table; on one table eight volumes of "The Decline and Fall" in a row; on the other, bottles of different shapes, water-pitcher and glasses, and a sugar-bowl; the floor on which these tables and settles stand, is bare and sanded; in centre, under a lighted gas chandelier, a flowery carpet, extending only to within two or three feet of the settles; on the carpet a little table, a sofa, and a footstool, all very showy; on the table stuffed birds, wax fruit and flowers; over the settle, L., two or three shelves, — one holding bottles, the other sundry "cold dishes," among which are half of a meat pie and a cold joint. MR. BOFFIN seated on settle; MRS. BOFFIN on her sofa, with her feet on footstool.

Boffin. This brings me round, my dear, to the question we left unfinished; namely, whether there's to be any go-in for Fashion.

Mrs. Boffin. Now, I'll tell you what I want, Noddy. I want Society.

Bof. Fashionable Society, my dear?

Mrs. Bof. (*Laughing heartily.*) Yes! It's no good my being kept here like Wax-Work; is it, now?

Bof. People have to pay to see Wax-Work, my

dear, whereas (though you'd be cheap at the same money) the neighbors is welcome to see *you* for nothing.

Mrs. Bof. But it don't answer. When we worked like the neighbors, we suited one another. Now we have left work off, we have left off suiting one another.

Bof. What do you think of beginning work again?

Mrs. Bof. Out of the question! We have come into a great fortune, and we must do what's right by our fortune; we must act up to it.

Bof. (*Thoughtfully.*) I suppose we must.

Mrs. Bof. It's never been acted up to yet, and, consequently, no good has come of it.

Bof. True, to the present time. I hope good may be coming of it in the future time. Towards which, what's your views, old lady?

Mrs. Bof. I say, a good house in a good neighborhood, good things about us, good living, and good society. I say, live like our means, without extravagance, and be happy.

Bof. Yes, I say be happy, too.

Mrs. Bof. Lor-a-mussy! (*Laughing, and clapping her hands, and gayly rocking herself to and fro.*) When I think of me in a light yellow chariot and pair, with silver boxes to the wheels —

Bof. O! you was thinking of that, was you, my dear?

Mrs. Bof. Yes! And with a footman up behind! And with a coachman up in front, sinking down into a seat big enough for three of him, all covered with upholstery in green and white! And with two bay

horses tossing their heads, and stepping higher than they trot long-ways! * And with you and me leaning back inside, as grand as ninepence! Oh-h-h-h My! Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!

[*Claps her hands, and rocks herself again, and wipes the tears of laughter from her eyes.*

Bof. (*Laughing.*) And what, my old lady — what's your views on the subject of the Bower?

Mrs. Bof. Shut it up. Don't part with it, but put somebody in it, to keep it.

Bof. Any other views?

Mrs. Bof. Noddy (*taking a seat by his side on the settle, and putting her arm in his*), next I think — and I really have been thinking early and late — of the disappointed girl; her that was so cruelly disappointed, you know, both of her husband and his riches. Don't you think we might do something for her? Have her to live with us? Or something of that sort?

Bof. Ne-ver once thought of the way of doing it! (*Smiting the table.*) What a thinking steam-ingen in this old lady is! And she don't know how she does it. Neither does the ingen!

Mrs. Bof. (*Pulls his ear.*) Last and not least, I have taken a fancy. You remember dear little John Harmon, before he went to school? Over yonder across the yard, at our fire? Now that he is past all benefit of the money, and it's come to us, I should like to find some orphan child, and take the boy and adopt him and give him John's name, and provide for him. Somehow, it would make me easier, I fancy. Say it's only a whim —

Bof. But I don't say so!

Mrs. Bof. No; but, deary, if you did —

Bof. I should be a Beast if I did!

Mrs. Bof. That's as much as to say you agree? Good and kind of you, and like you, deary! And now don't you begin to find it pleasant already, to think that a child will be made brighter, and better, and happier, because of that poor, sad child that day? And isn't it pleasant to know that the good will be done with the poor, sad child's own money?

Bof. Yes; and it's pleasant to know that you are Mrs. Boffin, and it's been a pleasant thing to know this many and many a year!

[*A loud knock. MR. B. goes to door, R., and ushers in SILAS WEGG. MRS. B. rises and stands, C., facing WEGG, who stops, R. C., and stares at her in amazement.*

Bof. (R.) Mrs. Boffin, Wegg, is a high-flyer at Fashion; and her make is such that she does it credit. As to myself, I ain't yet as Fash'nable as I may come to be. (*Crosses to L. C.*) Henerietty, old lady, this is the gentleman that's a going to decline and fall off the Rooshan Empire.

Mrs. Bof. (C.) And I am sure I hope it'll do you both good.

[*WEGG walks around, and examines the room and furniture.*

Bof. Do you like it, Wegg?

Wegg. I admire it greatly, sir. Peculiar comfort at this fireside, sir.

Bof. Do you understand it, Wegg?

Wegg. (*Slowly, and with his head on one side.*)
Why, in a general way, sir —

Bof. You *don't* understand it, Wegg, and I'll explain it. These arrangements is made by mutual consent between Mrs. Boffin and me. Mrs. Boffin, as I've mentioned. is a high-flyer at Fashion; at present I'm not. I don't go higher than comfort, and comfort of the sort that I'm equal to the enjoyment of. Well, then. Where would be the good of Mrs. Boffin and me quarrelling over it? We never did quarrel, before we came into Boffin's Bower as a property; why quarrel when we *have* come into Boffin's Bower as a property? So Mrs. Boffin, she keeps up her part of the room, in her way; I keep up my part of the room in mine. In consequence of which we have, at once, Sociability (I should go melancholy mad without Mrs. Boffin), Fashion, and Comfort. (MRS. B. *approaches him, and draws her arm through his.*) If I get by degrees to be a high-flyer at Fashion, then Mrs. Boffin will by degrees come for'arder. If Mrs. Boffin should ever be less of a dab at Fashion than she is at the present time, then Mrs. Boffin's carpet would go back'arder. If we should both continny as we are, why then *here* we are, and give us a kiss, old lady. (MRS. B. *kisses him*; MR. B. *wipes his mouth with an air of refreshment.*) So now, Wegg, you begin to know us as we are. This is a charming spot, is the Bower, but you must get to appreciate it by degrees. It's a spot to find out the merits of, little by little, and a new 'un every day. From those windows, there's a view of the neighboring premises, not to be surpassed. The premises of Mrs. Boffin's late father (Canine Provision

Trade), you look down into, as if they was your own. And the top of the High Mound in the yard is crowned with a lattice-work Arbor, in which, if you don't read out loud many a book in the summer, ay, and, as a friend, drop many a time into poetry, too, it shan't be my fault. Now, what'll you read on?

Wegg. Thank you, sir. I generally do it on gin and water.

Bof. (Eagerly.) Keeps the organ moist, does it, Wegg?

Wegg. (Slowly.) N-no, sir; I should hardly describe it so, sir. I should say, mellers it. Mellers it, is the word I should employ, Mr. Boffin.

[MRS. B. *mixes the gin and water, WEGG continuing to reconnoitre. WEGG drinks.*

Mrs. Bof. How do you find it, Mr. Wegg?

Wegg. Excellent, ma'am.

[*Sits on settle nearest the books; MR. B. sits opposite; WEGG takes out his spectacles, and prepares to put them on.*

Bof. (Filling his pipe.) Sorry to deprive you of a pipe, Wegg, but you can't do both together. Oh, and another thing I forgot to name! When you come in here of an evening, and look round you, and notice anything on a shelf that happens to catch your fancy, mention it.

Wegg. (Laying down his spectacles.) You read my thoughts, sir. *Do* my eyes deceive me, or is that object up there a — a pie? It can't be a pie!

Bof. (Looking uneasily from the shelf to the books.) Yes, it's a pie, Wegg.

Wegg. *Have* I lost my smell for fruits, or is it a apple-pie, sir?

Bof. It's a veal and ham pie.

Wegg. Is it, indeed, sir? And it would be hard, sir, to name the pie that is a better pie than a veal and hammer.

Bof. Have some, Wegg?

Wegg. Thank you, Mr. Boffin, I think I will, at your invitation. I wouldn't at any other party's, at the present juncture; but at yours, sir! — And meaty jelly, too — especially when a little salt, which is the case where there's ham — is melling to the organ.

[MR. B. *takes down the pie, and puts it on table; MRS. B. supplies a plate and knife and fork; WEGG attacks the pie vigorously.*

Bof. It ain't strictly *fashionable*, Wegg, to leave a larder exposed in that way; but I think it's hospitable.

Wegg. (*With his mouth full.*) Very!

Bof. You see, instead of saying, in an unmeaning sort of a way, to a visitor, "There are such and such things down stairs; will you have anything up?" you take the bold and practical course of saying, "Cast your eye along those shelves, and, if you see anything you like there, have it down."

[WEGG *pushes away his plate, and puts on his spectacles; BOFFIN lights his pipe; MRS. B. reclines in a fashionable manner on her sofa; WEGG takes up one of the volumes, and, leaning back, opens it.*

Wegg. Hem! This, Mr. Boffin and Lady, is the first chapter of the first wollume of the Decline and Fall off —

[*Stops, and looks hard at the book.*

Bof. What's the matter, Wegg?

Wegg. Why, it comes into my mind, do you know, sir (*looking again at the book*), that you made a little mistake this morning, which I had meant to set you right in, only something put it out of my head. I think you said Rooshan Empire, sir?

Bof. It is Rooshan; ain't it, Wegg?

Wegg. No, sir. Roman. Roman.

Bof. What's the difference, Wegg?

Wegg. The difference, sir? The difference, sir? — (*Hesitates.*) There you place me in a difficulty, Mr. Boffin. Suffice it to observe, that the difference is best postponed to some other occasion, when Mrs. Boffin does not honor us with her company. In Mrs. Boffin's presence, sir, we had better drop it. (*Repeats slowly.*) In Mrs. Boffin's presence, sir, we had better drop it.

[*WEGG reads, in a monotonous tone, from the first volume of "The Decline and Fall," as far as the death of Commodus, mispronouncing all the proper names, as well as many other words; MR. B. listens attentively, often taking his pipe from his mouth, and staring at WEGG in dumb amazement; MRS. B. goes to sleep, nods, wakes and sleeps again, many times during the reading. The reading ended, WEGG rises and takes his leave, accompanied to the door by MR. B. MRS. B. continues to sleep.*

Wegg. Good-night, Mr. Boffin!

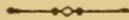
Bof. Good-night, Wegg! To-morrow. (*Shuts*

door, and returns to his settle; takes up book, and stares at it; lays it down again; stares at the fire, and soliloquizes.) Commodious—Commodious fights, in that wild beast show, seven hundred and thirty-five times in one character only! As if that wasn't stunning enough, a hundred lions is turned into that same wild beast show all at once! As if that wasn't stunning enough, Commodious, in another character, kills 'em all off in a hundred goes! As if that wasn't stunning enough, Vittle-us (and well named, too!) eats six millions' worth, English money, in seven months! Wegg takes it easy; but, upon my soul, to a old bird like myself, these are scarers! And even now that Commodious is strangled, I don't see a way to our bettering ourselves. (*Shakes his head pensively.*) I didn't think this morning there was half so many Scarers in Print. But I'm in for it now! (*Rising and going to Mrs. B.*) Come, old lady, bed-time!

[*Curtain.*

THE PROPOSAL.

THE PROPOSAL.*



SCENE: A Garden; L., *an arbor, with table, benches, &c.*; across the back, a garden wall; MRS. NICKLEBY and KATE, *walking together.*

Mrs. Nickleby. Kate, my dear, I don't know how it is, but a fine, warm summer day like this, with the birds singing in every direction, always puts me in mind of roast pig, with sage and onion sauce, and made gravy.

Kate. That's a curious association of ideas, is it not, mamma?

Mrs. N. Upon my word, my dear, I don't know. Roast pig — let me see. On the day five weeks after you were christened, we had a roast — no, that couldn't have been a pig, either, because I recollect there was a pair of them to carve, and your poor papa and I could never have thought of sitting down to two pigs — they must have been partridges. Roast pig! I hardly think we ever could have had one, now I come to remember; for your papa could never bear the sight of them in the shops, and used to say that they

* This dialogue may be used with advantage as Part II. of "Mrs. Nickleby's Suitor," in Vol. I. of this series.

always put him in mind of very little babies, only the pigs had much fairer complexions; and he had a horror of little babies, too, because he couldn't very well afford any increase to his family, and had a natural dislike to the subject. It's very odd, now, what can have put that in my head! I recollect dining once at Mrs. Bevan's, in that broad street round the corner by the coach-maker's, where the tipsy man fell through the cellar-flap of an empty house nearly a week before the quarter day, and wasn't found till the new tenant went in — and we had the roast pig there. It must be that, I think, that reminds me of it, especially as there was a little bird in the room, that would keep on singing all the time of dinner — at least, not a little bird, for it was a parrot, and he didn't sing exactly, for he talked and swore dreadfully; but I think it must be that. Indeed, I am sure it must. Shouldn't you say so, my dear?

Kate. I should say there was not a doubt about it, mamma.

Mrs. N. No; but *do* you think so, Kate? If you don't, say so at once, you know; because it's just as well to be correct, particularly on a point of this kind, which is very curious, and worth settling while one thinks about it.

Kate. (*Laughing.*) Oh, I am quite convinced, mamma. [*They sit down in the arbor, and sew.*]

Kate. (*Bending over her work.*) Mamma, before you were married, had you many suitors?

Mrs. N. Suitors, my dear! First and last, Kate, I must have had a dozen, at least.

Kate. Mamma!

Mrs. N. I had indeed, my dear, not including your poor papa, or a young gentleman who used to go, at that time, to the same dancing-school, and who *would* send gold watches and bracelets to our house in gilt-edged paper, (which were always returned,) and who afterwards unfortunately went out to Botany Bay in a cadet ship — a convict ship, I mean — and escaped into a bush and killed sheep (I don't know how they got there), and was going to be hung, only he accidentally choked himself, and the government pardoned him. Then there was young Lukin (*counts off the names on her fingers*), Mogley, Tipslark, Cabbery, Smifser —

Voice behind the wall. Hem!

Kate. (*Rising.*) Mamma, what was that

Mrs. N. Upon my word, my dear, unless it was the gentleman belonging to the next house, I don't know what it could possibly —

Voice. (*Very loud.*) A — hem!

Mrs. N. I understand it now, my dear. Don't be alarmed, my love; it's not directed to you, and is not intended to frighten anybody. Let us give everybody their due, Kate: I am bound to say that.

Kate. What do you mean, mamma?

Mrs. N. (*Rising.*) Don't be flurried, my dear, for you see I'm not; and if it would be excusable in anybody to be flurried, it certainly would — under all the circumstances — be excusable in me; but I am not, Kate — not at all.

Kate. It seems designed to attract our attention, mamma.

Mrs. N. It *is* designed to attract our attention, my

dear — at least to attract the attention of one of us. Hem! you needn't be at all uneasy, my dear.

[*Noise; a large cucumber shoots into the air over the garden wall, and falls at Mrs. N.'s feet. This is followed by another, and then by a shower of onions, and other small vegetables. After this appears over the wall an old black velvet cap, gradually followed by a very large head.*]

Kate. (*Moving off.*) Mamma, why do you stop? Why do you lose an instant? Mamma, pray come in!

Mrs. N. (*Holding her back.*) Kate, my dear, how can you be so foolish? I'm ashamed of you. How do you suppose you are ever to get through life, if you're such a coward as this! What do you want, sir? How dare you look into this garden?

Stran. (*Folding his hands together.*) Queen of my soul, this goblet sip!

Mrs. N. Nonsense, sir! Kate, my love, pray be quiet.

Stran. Won't you sip the goblet? (*With his head on one side and hand on his breast.*) O, do sip the goblet!

Mrs. N. I shall not consent to do anything of the kind, sir. Pray, begone!

Stran. (*Coming up a step higher.*) Why is it that beauty is always obdurate, even when admiration is as honorable and respectful as mine?

[*Smiles, kisses his hand — bows low.*]

Kate. Mamma, do you hear him?

Mrs. N. Hush, my dear! he is very polite, and I

think that was a quotation from the poets. Pray don't worry me so — you'll pinch my arm black and blue. Go away, sir!

Stran. Quite away? O, quite away?

Mrs. N. Yes, certainly. You have no business here. This is private property, sir; you ought to know that.

Stran. I do know that this is a sacred and enchanted spot, where the most divine charms (*kisses his hand and bows*) waft mellifluousness over the neighbors' gardens, and force the fruit and vegetables into premature existence. That fact I am acquainted with. But will you permit me, fairest creature, to ask you one question?

Mrs. N. Kate, it's very awkward, positively. I really don't know what to say to this gentleman. One ought to be civil, you know.

Kate. Dear mamma, don't say a word to him, but let us run away, as fast as we can, and shut ourselves up till Nicholas comes home.

Mrs. N. If you will conduct yourself, sir, like the gentleman I should imagine you to be, from your language and — and — appearance (quite the counterpart of your grandpapa, Kate, my dear, in his best days,) and will put your question to me in plain words, I will answer it.

[*The old gentleman pulls off his cap, exhibiting a perfectly bald head, makes several bows, accompanying each with a kiss of the hand, puts on his cap again, and proceeds.*

Stran. The question is (*looking cautiously round*), are you a princess?

Mrs. N. You are mocking me, sir.

Stran. No, but *are* you?

Mrs. N. You know I am not, sir.

Stran. (*Anxiously.*) Then are you any relation to the Archbishop of Canterbury? or to the Pope of Rome? or the speaker of the House of Commons? Forgive me, if I am wrong, but I was told you were niece to the Commissioners of Paving, and daughter-in-law to the Lord Mayor and Court of Common Council, which would account for your relationship to all three.

Mrs. N. Whoever has spread such reports, sir, has taken great liberties with my name, and one which I am sure my son Nicholas, if he was aware of it, would not allow for an instant. The idea! niece to the Commissioners of Paving!

Kate. Pray, mamma, come away!

Mrs. N. "Pray, mamma!" Nonsense, Kate; but that's just the way. If they had said I was niece to a piping bullfinch, what would you care! But I have no sympathy. (*Weeps.*) I don't expect it, that's one thing.

Stran. Tears! Catch the crystal globules — catch 'em — bottle 'em up — cork 'em tight — put sealing-wax on the top — seal 'em with a Cupid — label 'em "Best quality," and stow 'em away in the fourteen bin, with a bar of iron on the top to keep the thunder off! (*This last is spoken to imaginary attendants on the other side of the wall. He then turns respectfully to MRS. N.*) Beautiful madam, if I have made any mistake with regard to your family or connections, I humbly beseech you to pardon me. If I

supposed you to be related to Foreign Powers, or native Boards, it is because you have a manner, a carriage, a dignity, which you will excuse my saying that none but yourself can parallel. I am not a youth, ma'am, as you see; and although beings like you can never grow old, I venture to presume that we are fitted for each other.

Mrs. N. (*Faintly.*) Really, Kate, my love!

Stran. I have estates, ma'am, jewels, light-houses, fish-ponds, a whalery of my own in the North Sea, and several oyster-beds of great profit in the Pacific Ocean. I have enemies about me, ma'am, who attack me on all occasions, and wish to secure my property. If you bless me with your hand and heart, you can apply to the Lord Chancellor, or call out the military, if necessary — sending my tooth-pick to the commander-in-chief will be sufficient — and so clear the house of them before the ceremony is performed. After that, love, bliss, and rapture; rapture, love and bliss. Be mine! Be mine! Be mine!

Mrs. N. Kate, my dear, I have hardly power to speak; but it is necessary for the happiness of all parties that this matter should be set at rest forever.

Kate. Surely there is no necessity for you to say one word, mamma.

Mrs. N. You will allow me, my dear, if you please, to judge for myself.

Stran. Be mine! Be mine!

Mrs. N. It can scarcely be expected, sir, that I should tell a stranger whether I feel (*casting down her eyes*) flattered and obliged by such proposals, or not. They certainly are made under very singular circumstances;

still at the same time, as far as it goes. and to a certain extent, of course, they must be gratifying and agreeable to one's feelings.

Stran. Be mine, be mine! Gog and Magog, Gog and Magog. Be mine, be mine!

Mrs. N. It will be sufficient for me to say, sir, and I'm sure you'll see the propriety of taking an answer and going away — that I have made up my mind to remain a widow, and to devote myself to my children. You may not suppose I am the mother of two children — indeed many people have doubted it, but it is the case, and they are both grown up. We shall be very glad to have you for a neighbor — very glad — delighted, I'm sure — but in any other character it's quite impossible — quite.

[*Old gentleman suddenly throws off his coat and jumps on top of the wall; a hand is put up and scizes one of his ankles. He looks down behind the wall and bursts into a loud laugh.*]

Stran. It's you — is it?

Keeper's Voice. (*Gruffly.*) Yes, it's me.

Stran. How's the Emperor of Tartary?

Keeper. O, he's much the same as usual. No better and no worse.

Stran. The young Prince of China, is he reconciled to his father-in-law, the great potato salesman?

Keeper. No, and he says he never will be, that's more.

Stran. If that's the case, perhaps I'd better come down.

Keeper. Well, I think you had, perhaps.

[*Old gentleman drops into a sitting posture, and whilst looking round to bow to Mrs. N. is pulled off the wall from behind. His place is supplied by another man, who, touching his hat, addresses the ladies.*

Keeper. (*Grinning.*) Beg your pardon, ladies. Has he been making love to either of you?

Kate. Yes.

Keeper. (*Wiping his face.*) Ah! he always will, you know. Nothing will prevent his making love.

Kate. I need not ask you if he is out of his mind, poor creature.

Keeper. Why, no! That's pretty plain — that is.

Kate. Has he been long so?

Keeper. A long while.

Kate. And is there no hope for him?

Keeper. Not a bit, and don't deserve to be. He's a deal pleasanter without his senses than with 'em. He was the cruelest, wickedest, out-and-outerest old flint that ever drewed breath.

Kate. Indeed!

Keeper. By George! I never come across such a vagabond, and my mate says the same. Hope for *him!* There isn't too much hope going, but I'll bet a crown that what there is, is saved for more deserving chaps than him, anyhow.

[*Touches his hat and disappears. Mrs. N. sighs deeply and shakes her head.*

Kate. Poor creature!

Mrs. N. Ah! poor indeed! It's shameful that such things should be allowed — Shameful!

Kate. How can they be helped, mamma? The infirmities of nature —

Mrs. N. Nature! — What! Do *you* suppose this poor gentleman is out of his mind?

Kate. Can anybody who sees him entertain any other opinion, mamma?

Mrs. N. Why, then, I just tell you this, Kate, that he is nothing of the kind, and I am surprised you can be so imposed upon. It's some plot of these people to possess themselves of his property — didn't he say so himself? He may be a little odd and flighty, perhaps, many of us are that; but downright mad! and express himself as he does, respectfully, and in quite poetical language, and making offers with so much thought and care and prudence — not as if he ran into the streets, and went down upon his knees to the first chit of a girl he met, as a madman would! No, no, Kate, there's a great deal too much method in *his* madness; depend upon that, my dear.

[*They cross towards R. Curtain.*

MR. MICAWBER'S GAUNTLET.

MR. MICAWBER'S GAUNTLET.



SCENE: DAVID COPPERFIELD'S Chambers; L. and R., two doors; C., a table, on which are a punch bowl, bottles and glasses, pitcher of hot water, lemons, &c.; also two candles; several chairs, L. and R.; COPPERFIELD awaiting his friends; a bell rings, and MR. and MRS. MICAWBER and MR. TRADDLES, enter L., and interchange salutations.

Mr. Micawber. (*Looking about.*) My dear Copperfield, this is luxurious. This is a way of life which reminds me of the period when I was myself in a state of celibacy, and Mrs. Micawber had not yet been solicited to plight her faith at the Hymeneal Altar.

Mrs. Micawber. (*Archly.*) He means solicited by *him*, Mr. Copperfield. He cannot answer for others.

Mr. M. (*Seriously.*) My dear, I have no desire to answer for others. I am too well aware that when, in the inscrutable decrees of Fate, you were reserved for me, it is possible you may have been reserved for one, destined, after a protracted struggle, at length to fall a victim to pecuniary involvements of a complicated nature. I understand your allusion, my love. I regret it, but I can bear it.

Mrs. M. (*Bursting into tears.*) Micawber! Micawber! have I deserved this? I, who never have deserted you; who never *will* desert you, Micawber!

Mr. M. (*Much affected.*) My love, you will forgive, and our old and tried friend Copperfield will, I am sure, forgive, the momentary laceration of a wounded spirit, made sensitive by a recent collision with the Minion of Power — in other words, with a ribald Turn-cock attached to the water-works — and will pity, not condemn, its excesses. (*Weeps and embraces Mrs. M. and squeezes Mr. C.'s hand.*) My young friend, (*turning to COPPERFIELD*), I am older than you; a man of some experience in life — and of some experience, in short, in difficulties, generally speaking. At present, and until something turns up (which I am, I may say, hourly expecting), I have nothing to bestow but advice. Still my advice is so far worth taking that — in short, that I have never taken it myself, and am the, — the miserable wretch you behold!

Mrs. M. My dear Micawber!

Mr. M. I say, the miserable wretch you behold. My advice is, never do to-morrow what you can do to-day. Procrastination is the thief of time. Collar him.

Mrs. M. My poor papa's maxim.

Mr. M. My dear, your papa was very well in his way, and Heaven forbid that I should disparage him. Take him for all in all we ne'er shall — in short, make the acquaintance, probably, of anybody else possessing, at his time of life, the same legs for gaiters, and able to read the same description of print, without spectacles. But he applied that maxim to our mar-

riage, my dear, and that was so far prematurely entered into, in consequence, that I never recovered the expense. Not that I am sorry for it. Quite the contrary, my love. (*A pause.*) My other piece of advice, Copperfield, you know. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen, nineteen six, result happiness; annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought six, result misery. The blossom is blighted, the leaf withered, the God of day goes down upon the dreary scene, and — and, in short, you are forever floored. As I am! (*MR. and MRS. M. in tears.*)

Copperfield. Come, come, Mr. Micawber! Cheer up! Cheer up! This is to be a festive occasion, and I rely on you, my dear Mr. Micawber, for a bowl of punch. The materials are before you.

[*Leads him to the table; MR. M. recovers his spirits, takes his place behind table, c., and mixes the punch, talking volubly, all the time, to COPPERFIELD; MRS. M. sits on his right; COPPERFIELD on his left, and on left of COPPERFIELD, TRADDLES. MRS. M. and MR. T. converse in a low tone.*

Mr. M. (*To C.*) And how is our good friend Dr. Copperfield? — and all the circle at Canterbury?

Cop. I have none but good accounts of them.

Mr. M. I am most delighted to hear it. It was at Canterbury where we last met. Within the shadow, I may figuratively say, of that religious edifice, immortalized by Chaucer, which was anciently the resort of Pilgrims from the remotest corners of — in short, in the immediate neighborhood of the Cathedral.

Cop. It was, Mr. Micawber.

Mr. M. (*Cutting and squeezing the lemons.*) We are at present established, Copperfield, on what may be designated as a small and unassuming scale; but you are aware that I have, in the course of my career, surmounted difficulties and conquered obstacles. You are no stranger to the fact that there have been periods of my life when it has been requisite that I should pause until certain expected events should turn up; when it has been necessary that I should fall back before making what I trust I shall not be accused of presumption in terming — a spring. The present is one of those momentous stages in the life of man. You see me, fallen back, *for* a spring; and I have every reason to believe that a vigorous leap will shortly be the result. (*A pause.*) I am at present engaged in the sale of corn on commission; but it is an avocation which does not pay, — and some temporary embarrassments of a pecuniary nature have been the consequence. I am, however, delighted to add that I have now an immediate prospect of something turning up (I am not at liberty to say in what direction), which I trust will enable me to provide, permanently, for my family. (*Fills his glass and holds it up.*) But punch, my dear Copperfield, like time and tide (*tastes the punch*), waits for no man. Ah! it is at the present moment in high flavor. My love, will you give me your opinion?

Mrs. M. (*Tasting.*) Excellent, Micawber! Excellent!

Mr. M. Then I will drink, if my friend Copperfield will permit me to take that social liberty, to the

days when my friend Copperfield and myself were younger, and fought our way in the world, side by side. I may say, of myself and Copperfield, in words we have sung together before now, that —

“ We twa’ hae run about the braes,
And pu’d the gowans fine ”

— in a figurative point of view — on several occasions. I am not exactly aware what gowans may be, but I have no doubt that Copperfield and myself would frequently have taken a pull at them, if it had been feasible. (*Empties his glass.*) Ahem! My dear, another glass?

Mrs. M. A very little, Wilkins, my dear.

Cop. and Trad. No, no! Mr. Micawber, we can’t allow that! Fill up the glass!

[*MR. M. fills her glass and those of COPPERFIELD and TRADDLES.*

Mrs. M. (*Sipping her punch.*) As we are quite confidential here, Mr. Copperfield, Mr. Traddles being a part of our domesticity, I should much like to have your opinion on Mr. Micawber’s prospects. For corn, as I have repeatedly said to Mr. Micawber, may be gentlemanly, but it is not remunerative. Commission to the extent of two and ninepence in a fortnight cannot, however limited our ideas, be considered remunerative.

Cop. and Trad. Certainly not!

Mrs. M. And then I ask myself this question: If corn is not to be relied upon, what is? Are coals to be relied upon? Not at all. We have turned our

attention to that experiment, on the suggestion of my family, and we find it fallacious. (Mr. M., *leaning back in his chair, nods to the company approvingly.*) The articles of corn and coals (*argumentatively*), being equally out of the question, Mr. Copperfield, I naturally look round the world and say, "What is there in which a person of Mr. Micawber's talent is likely to succeed?" And I exclude the doing anything on commission, because commission is not a certainty. What is best suited to a person of Mr. Micawber's peculiar temperament is, I am convinced, a certainty. (C. and T. *murmur assent.*) I will not conceal from you, my dear Mr. Copperfield, that *I* have long felt the Brewing business to be particularly adapted to Mr. Micawber. Look at Barclay and Perkins! Look at Truman, Hanbury, and Buxton! It is on that extensive footing that Mr. Micawber, I know from my own knowledge of him, is calculated to shine; and the profits, I am told, are enormous! But if Mr. Micawber cannot get into those firms,—which decline to answer his letters, when he offers his services even in an inferior capacity,—what is the use of dwelling upon that idea? None. I may have a conviction that Mr. Micawber's manners —

Mr. M. Hem! Really, my dear.

Mrs. M. (*Laying her hand on his.*) My love, be silent. I may have a conviction, Mr. Copperfield, that Mr. Micawber's manners peculiarly qualify him for the Banking business. I may argue within myself, that if *I* had a deposit at a banking-house, the manners of Mr. Micawber, as representing that banking-house, would inspire confidence, and must extend the

connection. But if the various banking-houses refuse to avail themselves of Mr. Micawber's abilities, or receive the offer of them with contumely, what is the use of dwelling upon *that* idea? None. As to originating a banking-business, I may know that there are members of my family who, if they chose to place their money in Mr. Micawber's hands, might found an establishment of that description. But if they do *not* choose to place their money in Mr. Micawber's hands — which they don't — what is the use of that? Again I contend that we are no farther advanced than we were before.

Cop. Not a bit.

Mr. Traddles. Not a bit.

Mrs. M. What do I deduce from this? What is the conclusion, my dear Mr. Copperfield, to which I am irresistibly brought? Am I wrong in saying, it is clear that we must live?

Cop. Not at all.

Mr. T. Not at all.

Cop. A person must either live or die.

Mrs. M. Just so! It is precisely that. And the fact is, my dear Mr. Copperfield, that we can *not* live without something widely different from existing circumstances shortly turning up. Now I am convinced, myself, and this I have pointed out to Mr. Micawber several times of late, that things cannot be expected to turn up of themselves. We must, in a measure, assist to turn them up. I may be wrong, but I have formed that opinion.

Cop. } Good, excellent!
Mr. T. }

Mrs. M. Very well. Then what do I recommend? Here is Mr. Micawber, with a variety of qualifications — with great talent —

Mr. M. Really, my love.

Mrs. M. Pray, my dear, allow me to conclude. Here is Mr. Micawber, with a variety of qualifications, with great talent — *I* should say, with genius, but that may be the partiality of a wife —

Cop. }
Mr. T. } Oh, no!

Mrs. M. And here is Mr. Micawber without any suitable position or employment. Where does that responsibility rest? Clearly on society. Then I would make a fact so disgraceful known, and boldly challenge society to set it right. It appears to me, my dear Mr. Copperfield, that what Mr. Micawber has to do, is to throw down the gauntlet to society, and say, in effect, “Show me who will take that up. Let the party immediately step forward.”

Cop. And pray, Mrs. Micawber, how is this to be done?

Mrs. M. By advertising in all the papers. It appears to me, that what Mr. Micawber has to do, in justice to himself, in justice to his family, and I will even go so far as to say in justice to society, by which he has been hitherto overlooked, is to advertise in all the papers; to describe himself plainly as so and so, with such and such qualifications, and to put it thus: “*Now*, employ me, on remunerative terms, and address, post-paid, to *W. M.*, Post-Office, Camden Town.”

Mr. M. This idea of Mrs. Micawber’s, my dear Copperfield, is, in fact, the leap to which I alluded just now.

Cop. (*Dubiously.*) Advertising is rather expensive.

Mrs. M. Exactly so! Quite true, my dear Mr. Copperfield! I have made the identical observation to Mr. Micawber. It is for that reason especially, that I think Mr. Micawber ought (as I have already said in justice to himself, in justice to his family, and in justice to society) to raise a certain sum of money — on a bill. (*Mr. M. leans back in his chair and gazes at the ceiling, playing with his eye-glass.*) If no member of my family is possessed of sufficient natural feeling to negotiate that bill — I believe there is a better business-term to express what I mean —

Mr. M. Discount.

Mrs. M. To discount that bill, then my opinion is, that Mr. Micawber should go into the City, should take that bill into the Money Market, and should dispose of it for what he can get. If the individuals in the Money Market oblige Mr. Micawber to sustain a great sacrifice, that is between themselves and their consciences. I view it, steadily, as an investment. I recommend Mr. Micawber, my dear Mr. Copperfield, to do the same; to regard it as an investment which is sure of return, and to make up his mind to *any* sacrifice.

Cop. Very self-denying and devoted in you, Mrs. Micawber.

Mr. T. Very.

Mrs. M. I will not (*finishing her punch*) — I will not protract these remarks on the subject of Mr. Micawber's pecuniary affairs. At your fireside, my dear Mr. Copperfield, and in the presence of Mr. Traddles, who,

though not so old a friend, is quite one of ourselves, I could not refrain from making you acquainted with the course *I* advise Mr. Micawber to take. I feel that the time is arrived when Mr. Micawber should exert himself, and, I will add, assert himself, and it appears to me that these are the means. I am aware that I am merely a female, and that a masculine judgment is usually considered more competent to the discussion of such questions; still I must not forget that when I lived at home with my papa and mamma, my papa was in the habit of saying, "Emma's form is fragile, but her grasp of a subject is inferior to none." That my papa was too partial, I well know; but that he was an observer of character in some degree, my duty and my reason equally forbid me to doubt.

[*Exit* MRS. M., R.]

Mr. M. There's a woman! Such a wife as she has made! Ever a guide, philosopher, and friend to me. Take my advice, Copperfield, and when you marry, marry such a woman as that, if such another is to be found.

Mr. C. Allow me to propose: Mrs. Micawber! (*They drink together; MRS. M. re-enters and resumes her place at table.*)

Mr. M. And here's to Canterbury! Success to it! We were very comfortable there, and I shall never forget the agreeable hours passed there.

[*They then "toast" one another in succession; all join hands around the table and sing "Auld Lang Syne," and the Scene closes.*]

SCENES IN "THE FLEET."



OLD WELLER AND THE COACHMEN.

From a design by S. EYTINGE, JR.

Engraved expressly for JAS. R. OSGOOD & CO.'S Diamond Dickens.

SCENES IN "THE FLEET."



SAM WELLER'S RESOLUTION.

SCENE: MR. PICKWICK'S ROOM in Prison.* MR. P. seated; SAM inspecting the room; sundry packages in one corner.

Mr. Pickwick. Well, Sam.

Sam. Well, sir.

Mr. P. Pretty comfortable now, eh, Sam?

Sam. (*Disparagingly.*) Pretty vell, sir.

Mr. P. Have you seen Mr. Tupman, and our other friends?

Sam. Yes, I *have* seen 'em, sir, and they're a-comin' to-morrow.

Mr. P. You have brought the things I wanted? (*SAM points to packages.*) Very well, Sam. (*Hesitates.*) Listen to what I am going to say, Sam.

Sam. Cert'nly, sir; fire away, sir.

Mr. P. (*Solemnly.*) I have felt from the first, Sam, that this is not the place to bring a young man to.

* Judgment having been declared against MR. PICKWICK, in the famous case of BARDELL *vs.* PICKWICK, he refused to pay the damages awarded MRS. BARDELL by the jury, and was therefore sent to prison.

Sam. Nor an old 'un neither, sir.

Mr. P. You're quite right, Sam; but old men may come here through their own heedlessness and unsus-
picion; and young men may be brought here by the
selfishness of those they serve. It is better for those
young men, in every point of view, that they should
not remain here. Do you understand me, Sam?

Sam. Vy no, sir, I do not.

Mr. P. Try, Sam.

Sam. (*After a short pause.*) Vell, sir, I think I
see your drift; and if I do see your drift, it's my 'pin-
ion that you're a-comin' it altogether too strong, as the
mail-coachman said to the snow-storm, ven it overtook
him.

Mr. P. I see you comprehend me, Sam. Inde-
pendently of my wish that you should not be idling
about a place like this for years to come, I feel that
for a debtor in the Fleet to be attended by his man-ser-
vant is a monstrous absurdity. Sam, for a time, you
must leave me.

Sam. (*Sarcastically.*) O, for a time, eh. sir?

Mr. P. Yes, for the time that I remain here. Your
wages I shall continue to pay. Any one of my three
friends will be happy to take you, were it only out of
respect to me. And if I ever do leave this place, — if
I do, I pledge you my word that you shall return to me
instantly.

Sam. (*Gravely.*) Now I'll tell you wot it is, sir,
this here sort o' thing won't do at all; so don't let's
hear no more about it.

Mr. P. I am serious, and resolved, Sam.

Sam. (*Firmly.*) You air, air you, sir? Wery good, sir. Then so am I.

[*Presses his hat on firmly with both hands, and hurries out of the room.*

Mr. P. (*Rising and calling off.*) Sam! Sam!
Here! [Curtain.

HOW HE CARRIED IT OUT.

SCENE: A Room in an Inn; *table and chairs, c.*; MR. WELLER seated at table; enter SAM in haste.

Samuel. O, here you are!

Mr. Weller. (*Looking up.*) Samivel! Wot are you a-doin' on here? Your Gov'nor can't do no good here, Sammy. They won't pass that werdick, — they won't pass it, Sammy. (*Shakes his head solemnly.*)

Sam. Wot a perverse old file it is! Always a-goin' on about the werdicks, and alleybis, and that. Who said anythin' about the werdick? (*MR. W. shakes his head learnedly, without replying.*) Leave off rattlin' that 'ere nob o' yours, if you don't want it to come off the springs altogether, and behave reasonable. I vent all the vay down to the Markis o' Granby arter you, last night.

Mr. W. (*Sighing.*) Did you see the Marchioness o' Granby, Sammy?

Sam. Yes, I did.

Mr. W. How was the dear creetur a-lookin'?

Sam. Wery queer. I think she's a-injurin' herself gradivally vith too much o' that 'ere pine-apple rum, and other strong medicines o' the same natur.

Mr. W. (*Earnestly.*) You don't mean that, Sammy?

Sam. I do, indeed.

[*MR. W. seizes his hand, clasps it, and lets it fall.*

Mr. W. I ain't quite certain, Sammy; I wouldn't

like to say I was altogether positive, in case of any subsekent disapp'intment, but I rayther think, my boy — I rayther think — that the Shepherd's got the liver complaint.

Sam. Does he look bad?

Mr. W. He's oncommon pale, 'cept about the nose, wich is redder than ever. His appetite is wery so-so, but he imbibes wonderful.

[*MR. W. and SAM interchange a succession of nods and winks.*]

Sam. Vell, now about my affair. Gov'nor's turned me off.

Mr. W. (*Astonished.*) What?

Sam. Won't let me stay vith him.

Mr. W. Stop there by himself, poor creetur! Without nobody to take his part! It can't be done, Samivel, it can't be done.

Sam. O' course it can't. I knowed that afore I came.

Mr. W. Wy, they'll eat him up alive, Sammy. (*SAM nods.*) He goes in rayther raw, Sammy, and he'll come out, done so exceedin' brown, that his most formiliar friends won't know him. Roast pigeon's nothin' to it, Sammy. (*S. nods.*) It oughtn't to be, Samivel.

Sam. It *mustn't* be.

Mr. W. Cert'nly not.

Sam. Vell, now, you've been a-prophesyin' away, wery fine, like a red-faced Nixon, as the sixpenny books gives picturs on.

Mr. W. Who wos he, Sammy?

Sam. Never mind who he was. He warn't a coachman; that's enough for you.

Mr. W. (Musing.) I know'd a 'ostler o' that name.

Sam. It warn't him. This 'ere gen'l'm'n was a prophet.

Mr. W. (Sternly.) Wot's a prophet?

Sam. Wy, a man as tells wot's a-goin' to happen.

Mr. W. I wish I'd know'd him, Sammy. P'r'aps he might ha' throw'd a small light on that 'ere liver complaint, as we wos a speakin' on, just now. Hows'-ever, if he's dead, and ain't left the bis'ness to nobody, there's an end on't. (*Sighs.*) Go on, Sammy.

Sam. Well, you've been a-prophesyin' away about what'll happen to the Gov'nor if he's left alone. Don't you see any vay o' takin' care on him?

Mr. W. (Reflecting.) No, I don't, Sammy.

Sam. No vay at all!

Mr. W. No vay, unless (*brightens up and whispers in SAM'S ear*) it is getting him out in a turn-up bedstead, unbeknown to the turnkeys, Sammy? Or dressin' him up like a old 'ooman vith a green wail? (*SAM shakes his head in reply to each question.*)

Sam. You don't see no vay at all, then?

Mr. W. No, if he von't let you stop there, I see no vay at all. It's no thoroughfare, Sammy, no thoroughfare.

Sam. Well, then, I'll tell you wot it is. I'll trouble you for the loan o' five-and-tventy pound.

Mr. W. What good'll that do?

Sam. Never mind. P'r'aps you may ask for it, five minutes artervurds; p'ra'ps I may say I von't pay, and cut up rough. You von't think o' arrestin' your own son for the money, and sendin' him off to the

Fleet, will you, you unnat'ral wagabone? (*They wink at one another; MR. W. laughs until he is purple.*) Wot a old image it is! Wot are you a-settin' there for, wen there's so much to be done? Vere's the money?

Mr. W. In the boot, Sammy, in the boot. Hold my hat, Sammy. (*SAM takes his hat. MR. W. twists himself around until he gets his hand into the pocket of his coat; takes out an enormous wallet, and draws from it two whip-lashes, three or four buckles, a sample bag of corn, and, finally, a roll of dirty bills, some of which he gives to SAM.*) And now, Sammy, I know a gen'l'm'n here, as'll do the rest of the bisness for us in no time — a limb o' the law, Sammy, as has got brains like the frogs, dispersed all over his body, and reachin' to the verry tips of his fingers. A friend o' the Lord Chancellorship's, Sammy, who'd only have to tell him what he wanted, and he'd lock you up for life, if that wos all.

Sam. I say, — none o' that!

Mr. W. None o' wot?

Sam. Wy, none o' them unconstitootional ways o' doin' it. The have-his-carcass, next to the perpetual motion, is vun o' the blessedest things as wos ever made. I've read that 'ere in the newspapers, verry of'en.

Mr. W. Well, wot's that got to do vith it?

Sam. Just this 'ere, that I'll patronize the invention, and go in that vay. No visperin's to the Chancellorship. I don't like the notion. It mayn't be altogether safe, vith reference to the gettin' out again.

[*Exit MR. W. SAM sits at table and orders beer; two or three coachmen, friends of*

MR. W., *drop in, and after saluting SAM and ordering in beer, sit at table with him; they toast one another.*

1st Coachman. Come, gentlemen, let's have a song!

2d Coachman. If you're so anxious for a song, sing one yourself.

1st Coach. Thank'ee, I'd rather not.

2d Coach. Why not?

1st Coach. 'Cause I don't chose to. (*Some excitement ensues, which SAM watches quietly.*)

3d Coachman. Gentlemen, rather than disturb the harmony of this occasion, perhaps Mr. Samuel Weller will oblige the company.

Sam. Raly, gen'l'm'n, I'm not wery much in the habit o' singin' without the instrument; but anythin' for a quiet life, as the man said wen he took the sitivation at the lighthouse. (*Sings.*)

I.

Bold Turpin vunce, on Hounslow Heath,
 His bold mare Bess bestrode-er;
 Ven there he see'd the Bishop's coach
 A-coming along the road-er.
 So he gallops close to the 'orses' legs,
 And he claps his head vithin;
 And the Bishop says, "Sure as eggs is eggs,
 This here's the bold Turpin."
 Chorus. And the Bishop says, &c.

II.

Says Turpin, "You shall eat your words,
 With a sarce of leaden bul-let;"

So he puts a pistol to his mouth,
 And he fires it down his gul-let.
 The coachman he, not likin' the job,
 Set off at a full gal-lop ;
 But Dick put a couple of balls in his nob,
 And perwailed on him to stop.

Chorus. (*Sarcastically.*) But Dick, &c.

1st Coach. I maintain that that 'ere song's personal to the cloth. I demand the name o' that coachman.

Sam. Nobody know'd. He hadn't got his card in his pocket.

1st Coach. I object to the introduction o' politics. I submit that, in the present company, that 'ere song's political ; and, wot's much the same, that it ain't true. I say that that coachman did *not* run away ; but that he died game — game as pheasants ; and I won't hear nothin' said to the contrairey.

Enter MR. WELLER and MR. PELL. lawyer.

Mr. W. All right, Sammy.

Mr. Pell. The officer will be here right away. I suppose you won't run away meanwhile, eh? Ha! ha!

Sam. (*Grinning.*) P'r'aps my cruel pa 'ull relent afore then.

Mr. W. Not I!

Sam. Do.

Mr. W. Not on no account.

Sam. I'll give bills for the amount, at sixpence a month.

Mr. W. I won't take 'em.

Mr. P. Ha, ha, ha! Very good, very good. A very amusing incident indeed! (*Hands Mr. W. a paper.*) Bill of costs, Mr. Weller. (*Mr. W. gives him money.*) Thank you, thank you. Three ten and one ten is five. Much obliged to you, Mr. Weller. Your son is a most deserving young man, very much so, indeed, sir. It's a very pleasant trait in a young man's character — very much so.

Mr. W. (*Chuckling.*) Wot a game it is! A reg'lar prodigy son!

Mr. P. (*Mildly.*) Prodigal, prodigal son, sir!

Mr. W. (*With dignity.*) Never mind, sir. I know wot's o'clock, sir. Wen I don't, I'll ask you, sir. (*Enter officer.*) Here's your man, Sammy. Wot do you say, mates, shall we see him to prison?

Coachmen. That we will!

[*Officer leads the way; Mr. W. and SAM, arm-in-arm, come next; the coachmen, also arm-in-arm, bring up the rear, and exeunt omnes.*

A TRIUMPHANT SUCCESS.

SCENE: MR. PICKWICK'S ROOM in Prison. MR. P.
seated, reading; a knock.

Mr. Pickwick. Come in. (*SAM enters, pulls off his hat, and smiles.*) Ah, Sam, my good lad, I had no intention of hurting your feelings yesterday, my faithful fellow, by what I said. Put down your hat, Sam, and let me explain my meaning a little more at length.

Sam. Won't presently do, sir?

Mr. P. Certainly; but why not now?

Sam. I'd rayther not now, sir.

Mr. P. Why?

Sam. (*Hesitating.*) 'Cause —

Mr. P. (*Alarmed.*) Because of what? Speak out, Sam.

Sam. (*Confused.*) 'Cause I've got a little bis'ness as I want to do.

Mr. P. What business?

Sam. Nothin' partickler.

Mr. P. O, if it's nothing particular, you can speak with me first.

Sam. I think I'd better see arter it at once. The fact is —

Mr. P. Well, speak out, Sam.

Sam. Why, the fact is, p'r'aps I'd better see arter my bed, afore I do anythin' else.

Mr. P. Your *bed!*

Sam. Yes, my bed, sir. I'm a pris'ner. I was arrested this here wery arternoon for debt.

Mr. P. (*Falling back in his chair.*) You arrested for debt!

Sam. Yes, for debt, sir; and the man as put me in 'ull never let me out till you go yourself.

Mr. P. Bless my heart and soul! What *do* you mean?

Sam. Wot I say, sir. If it's forty year to come, I shall be a pris'ner, and I'm very glad on it; and if it had been Newgate, it would ha' been just the same. Now the murder's out, and hang it, there's an end on it.

Mr. P. What's the name of your creditor, Sam?

Sam. I'd rayther not tell you, sir!

Mr. P. But why not, Sam?

Sam. 'Tain't o' no use, sir. He's a ma-licious, bad-disposed, vurldly-minded, spiteful, vindictive creetur, vith a hard heart as there ain't no softnin, as the virtuous clergyman remarked o' the old gen'l'm'n vith the dropsy, ven he said that upon the whole he thought he'd rayther leave his property to his vife than build a chapel vith it.

Mr. P. But consider, Sam; the sum is so small that it can very easily be paid. And having made up my mind that you shall stop with me, you should recollect how much more useful you would be, if you could go outside the walls.

Sam. Wery much obliged to you, sir; but I'd rayther not.

Mr. P. Rather not do what, Sam?

Sam. Wy, sir, I'd rayther not let myself down to ask a favor o' this here un-remorseful enemy.

Mr. P. But it's no favor asking him to take his money, Sam.

Sam. Beg your pardon, sir, but it would be a very great favor to pay it, and he don't deserve none. That's were it is, sir. (*Mr. P. looks vexed.*) I takes my determination on principle, sir, and you takes yours on the same ground; wich puts me in mind o' the man as killed his-self on principle; wich, o' course, you've heerd on, sir.

Mr. P. There is no "of course" in the case, Sam. (*Breaks into a smile.*) The fame of the gentleman in question never reached my ears.

Sam. No, sir? You astonish me, sir. He was a a clerk in a gov'ment office, sir.

Mr. P. Was he?

Sam. Yes, he was, sir, and a very pleasant gen'l'm'n, too—one o' the percise and tidy sort, as puts their feet in little India-rubber fire-buckets wen it's wet weather, and never has no other bosom friends but hare skins; he saved his money on principle; wore a clean shirt ev'ry day on principle; never spoke to none of his relations on principle, fear they should want to borrow money of him; and was altogether, in fact, an uncommon agreeable character. He had his hair cut on principle vunce a fortnight, and contracted for his clothes on the economic principle—three suits a year, and send back the old 'uns. Vell, sir, one night he wos took wery ill; sends for the doctor. Doctor comes in a green fly. "Wot's the matter?" says the doctor. "Wery ill," says the patient. "Wot have you been

a-eatin' on?" says the doctor. "Roast weal," says the patient. "Wot's the last thing you dewoured?" says the doctor. "Crumpets," says the patient. "That's it," says the doctor. "I'll send you a box of pills directly, and don't you never take no more of 'em," he says. "No more o' wot?" says the patient — "Pills?" "No; crumpets," says the doctor. "Wy!" says the patient, starting up in bed, "I've eat four crumpets ev'ry night, for fifteen year, on principle." "Well, then, you'd better leave 'em off on principle," says the doctor. "Crumpets is wholesome, sir," says the patient. "Crumpets is NOT wholesome, sir," says the doctor, wery fierce. "But they're so cheap," says the patient, comin' down a little, "and so wery fillin' at the price." "They'd be dear to you at any price; dear if you wos paid to eat 'em," says the doctor. "Four crumpets a night," he says, "vill do your business in six months." "Are you sure o' that 'ere, sir?" says the patient. "I'll stake my professional reputation on it," says the doctor. "How many crumpets at a sittin' do you think 'ud kill me off at once?" says the patient. "I don't know," says the doctor. "Do you think half a crown's wurth 'ud do it?" says the patient. "I think it might," says the doctor. "Three shillins' wurth 'ud be sure to do it, I s'pose?" says the patient. "Certainly," says the doctor. "Wery good," says the patient; "good night." Next mornin' he gets up, has a fire lit, orders in three shillins' wurth o' crumpets, toasts 'em all, eats 'em all, and blows his brains out.

Mr. P. (*Abruptly.*) What did he do that for?

Sam. Wot did he do it for, sir? Wy, in support

of his great principle, that crumpets wos wholesome, and to show that he wouldn't be put out of his way for nobody. (*Looks comically at Mr. P.*) Well, sir, it's time for me to be lookin' arter that 'ere bed, sir.

[*Exit SAM. Curtain.*]

A FAMILY PARTY.

SCENE: A Room in a Prison. *Walls bare; at back, C., a door; R., another door. The furniture consists of a small table and several wooden chairs.*

Mr. Weller. (At C. D., calling off.) Weller! Well-er!

Sam. (Entering hurriedly.) Wot are you a' roarin' at? makin' yourself so precious hot that you look like a aggrawated glass-blower? Wot's the matter?

Mr. W. Ah, ha! I begun to be afeerd that you'd gone for a walk round the Regency Park, Sammy.

Sam. Come, none o' them taunts agin the wictim o' avarice. Wot's the matter?

Mr. W. I've got sich a game for you, Sammy. (Chuckles immoderately.)

Sam. Keep quiet, do. There never vos such a old picter card born. Wot are you bustin' vith now?

Mr. W. Sammy, I'm afeerd that one o' these days I shall laugh myself into a appleplexy, my boy.

Sam. Vell then, wot do you do it for? Now, wot have you got to say?

Mr. W. Who do you think's come here with me, Samivel?

Sam. Pell? (MR. W. shakes his head.) Mottled-faced man, p'r'aps? (MR. W. again shakes his head.) Who then?

Mr. W. (Sitting, L. C.) Your mother-in-law! Your mother-in-law, Sammy, and the red-nosed man, my boy; and the red-nosed man. Ho! ho! ho!

(SAM *grins*; MR. W. *wipes his eyes*.) They've come to have a little ser'ous talk vith you, my boy. Don't let out nothin' about the unnat'ral creditor, Sammy.

Sam. Wot, don't they know who it is?

Mr. W. Not a bit on it.

Sam. (*Sitting, c.*) Vere are they?

Mr. W. In the snuggerly. Catch the red-nosed man a-goin' anyvere but vere the liquors is; not he, Samivel — not he. Ve'd a wery pleasant ride along the road from the Markis, this mornin', Sammy. I drove the old piebald in that 'ere little shaycart as belonged to your mother-in-law's first wenter, into vich a harm-cheer vos lifted for the Shepherd; and I'm blessed if they didn't bring a portable flight o' steps out into the road 'a front o' our door for him to get up by. (*Another fit of laughter.*)

Sam. You don't mean that?

Mr. W. I do mean that, Sammy; and I vish you could a' seen how tight he held on by the sides wen he did get up, as if he vos afeerd o' bein' precipitayted down full six foot, and dashed into a million o' hatoms. He tumbled in at last, however, and away ve vent; and I rayther think — I say I *rayther* think, Samivel, — that he found hissself a little jolted ven we turned the corners.

Sam. Wot! I s'pose you happened to drive up agin a post or two?

Mr. W. I'm afeerd (*winking at S.*), I'm afeerd I took vun or two on 'em, Sammy; he vos a-flyin' out o' the harm-cheer all the way. (*Convulsed with laughter. SAM goes to him, in alarm; W. recovers.*) Don't be frightened, Sammy, don't be frightened; it's only a kind o' quiet laugh as I'm a tryin' to come, Sammy.

Sam. Well, if that's wot it is, you'd better not try to come it agin.. You'll find it rayther a dangerous invention. (*Returns to his seat.*)

Mr. W. Don't you like it, Sammy?

Sam. Not at all.

Mr. W. Well, it 'ud a been a verry great accommodation to me if I could a done it, and 'ud a saved a good many vurds atween your mother-in-law and me, sometimes; but I'm afeerd you're right, Sammy: it's too much in the appleplexy line — a great deal too much, Samivel.

Enter, R., MRS. W., followed by STIGGINS. SAM rises, and politely salutes MRS. W.

Sam. Mother-in-law, verry much obliged to you for this here wisit. Shepherd, how air you?

Mrs. W. (R. C.) O, Samuel! This is dreadful.

Sam. Not a bit on it, mum. Is it, Shepherd? (MR. STIGGINS, R., *raises both hands, and rolls up his eyes.*) Is this here gen'l'm'n troubled vith any painful complaint?

Mrs. W. The good man is grieved to see you here, Samuel.

Sam. O, that's it — is it? (MRS. W. *sits*, R. C.) I was afeard, from his manner, that he might ha' forgotten to take pepper vith that 'ere last cowcumber he eat. Set down, sir; ve make no extra charge for the settin'-down, as the king remarked wen he blowed up his ministers.

Stiggins. (*Ostentatiously.*) Young man, I fear you are not softened by imprisonment. (*Crosses and sits*, L.)

Sam. Beg your pardon, sir, wot was you gracious-ly pleased to hobserve?

Stig. (*In a loud voice.*) I apprehend, young man, that your nature is no softer for this chastening.

Sam. Sir, you're verry kind to say so. I hope my natur is *not* a soft vun, sir. Wery much obliged to you for your good opinion, sir.

[*MR. WELLER, in the corner, L., behind STIGGINS, checks himself in a laugh.*

Mrs. W. Weller! Weller! Come forth.

Mr. W. Wery much obleeged to you, my dear, but I'm quite comfortable vere I am.

[*MRS. W. bursts into tears.*

Sam. Wot's gone wrong, mum?

Mrs. W. O, Samuel, your father makes me wretched. Will nothing do him good?

Sam. Do you hear this 'ere? Lady wants to know vether nothin' 'ull do you good?

Mr. W. Wery much indebted to Mrs. Weller for her po-lite inquiry, Sam. I think a pipe 'ud benefit me a good deal. Could I be accommodated, Sammy?

[*MRS. W. weeps again; STIGGINS groans.*

Sam. Hulloo! Here's this unfort'nit gen'l'm'n, took ill agin. Where do you feel it now, sir?

Stig. In the same place, young man, in the same place.

Sam. Where may that be, sir?

Stig. In the buzzim, young man. (*Places his umbrella on his waistcoat.*

Sam. I'm afeerd that this 'ere gen'l'm'n, with the twist in his countenance, feels rayther thirsty, with the melancholy spectacle afore him — is it the case, mum?

[*STIGGINS intimates by signs that he is thirsty.*

Mrs. W. (*Mournfully.*) I am afraid, Samuel, that his feelings have made him so, indeed.

Sam. Wot's your usual tap, sir?

Stig. O, my dear young friend, all taps is vanities.

Mrs. W. (*Groaning.*) Too true, too true, indeed.

Sam. Well I des-say they may be, sir; but wich is your *partik'ler* wanity — vich wanity do you like the flavor on best, sir?

Stig. O, my dear young friend, I despise them all. If — if there is any one of them less odious than another, it is the liquor called rum — warm, my dear young friend, with three lumps of sugar to the tumbler.

Sam. Wery sorry to say, sir, that they don't allow that *partik'ler* wanity to be sold in this here establishment.

Stig. O, the hardness of heart of these inveterate men! O, the accursed cruelty of these inhuman persecutors! (*Casts up his eyes and raps his breast with his umbrella.*) A bottle of port then, warmed, with a little water, spice and sugar, if you please, my friend.

[*SAM goes out, gives the order, and returns;*
MRS. WELLER and STIGGINS look at MR.
W. and groan.

Mr. W. Well, Sammy, I hope you'll find your spirits rose by this here lively wisit. Wery cheerful and improvin' conversation — ain't it, Sammy?

Sam. You're a reprobate, and I desire you won't address no more o' them ungraceful remarks to me.

[*MR. WELLER grins; MRS. W. and STIGGINS close their eyes and rock themselves to and fro. MR. W. rises, comes for-*

ward and performs a pantomime behind STIGGINS, I. C., shaking his fist very near the latter's head. The wine is brought and put on table, c. SAM fills a glass and carries it to STIGGINS; STIGGINS opens his eyes with a start, and brings his head in contact with MR. W.'s clinched fist. STIGGINS rubs his head.

Sam. (Stopping.) Wot are you a' reachin' out your hand for the tumbler in that 'ere sawage way for? Don't you see you've hit the gen'l'm'n?

Mr. W. (Retreating.) I didn't go to do it, Sammy.

Sam. (To STIGGINS.) Try an in'ard application, sir. Wot do you think o' that for a go o' wanity, warm, sir?

[STIGGINS tastes the wine, and smacks his lips; puts his umbrella on the floor, and tastes again; passes his hand over his stomach, then drinks the whole at a breath, and holds out the tumbler for more. A tumbler is offered to MRS. W., who protests that she never touches a drop, but is at last persuaded to try it; she and STIGGINS draw up to the table and finish the bottle between them.]

Mr. W. I'll tell you wot it is, Samivel, my boy, I think there must be somethin' wrong in your mother-in-law's inside, as vell as in that o' the red-nosed man.

Sam. Wot do you mean?

Mr. W. I mean this 'ere, Sammy, that wot they drink don't seem no nourishment to 'em; it all turns

to warm water, and comes a pourin' out o' their eyes. 'Pend upon it, Sammy, it's a constitootional infirmity.

Stig. (*Rising and supporting himself by one hand on the back of his chair, whilst he gesticulates with the other.*) My young friend, listen to a few words of counsel and wisdom from one who knows the world better than you. (*Mrs. W. raises both hands and groans.*) Be on your guard, I adjure you, in this sink of iniquity into which you are cast. (*Staggers, but recovers himself.*) Abstain, my dear young friend, from all hypocrisy and pride of heart. Take, in all things, exact pattern and copy from him who stands before you. Avoid, I conjure you, above all things, the vice of intoxication, and the use of those poisonous and baleful drugs which, being chewed in the mouth, filch — away — the — mem — o — ry —

[*Clutches at the chair with both hands; leans over the back of it for some time, with one eye closed, and winking with the other at SAM. During the speech, SAM sits cross-legged on a chair, R., with his arms on the top-rail, looking blandly at STIGGINS. MR. W., half asleep; STIGGINS recovers his senses, draws on his gloves, and sits down.*

Sam. Brayvo! Wery pretty — wery pretty!

Mrs. W. (*Solemnly.*) I hope it may do you good, Samuel.

Sam. I think it vill, mum.

Mrs. W. I wish I could hope that it would do your father good.

Mr. W. Thank'ee, my dear; how do *you* find yourself arter it, my love?

Mrs. W. Scoffer!

Stig. (*Recovering and rising again.*) Benighted man!

Mr. W. If I don't get no better light than that 'ere moonshine, o' yourn, my worthy creetur, it's very likely as I shall continey to be a night-coach, till I'm took off the road altogether. Now, Mrs. We, if the piebald stands at livery much longer, he'll stand at nothin' as we go back, and p'r'aps that 'ere harm-cheer 'ull be tipped over into some hedge or another, with the Shepherd in it.

Stig. (*Hastily taking his hat and umbrella from the floor and starting for the door, R.*) Let us depart at once.

[*STIGGINS and MRS. W. go to the door, accompanied by SAM, who bids them farewell; MR. W. goes to door and stops.*]

Mr. W. A-do, Samivel.

Sam. What's a-do?

Mr. W. Well, good-by, then.

Sam. O, that's what you're a-aimin' at — is it? Good-by!

Mr. W. (*Looking cautiously round and whispering.*) Sammy, my duty to your Gov'ner, and tell him if he thinks better of this here bis'ness, to com-moonicate vith me. Me and a cab'net-maker has dewised a plan for gettin' him out. A pianner, Samivel — a pianner!

[*Taps SAM on the breast, and falls back a step or two.*]

Sam. Wot do you mean?

Mr. W. (*Mysteriously.*) A pianner-forty, Samivel, as he can have on hire ; vun as von't play, Sammy.

Sam. And wot 'ud be the good o' that?

Mr. W. Let him send to my friend, the cab'net-maker, to fetch it back, Sammy. Are you avake, now?

Sam. No!

Mr. W. (*Still whispering.*) There ain't no vurks in it! It 'ull hold him easy, vith his hat and shoes on, and breathe through the legs, vich is holler. Have a passage ready taken for ——. The —— gov'ment vill never give him up ven they find he's got money to spend, Sammy. Let the Gov'ner stop there till Mrs. Bardell's dead, or Mr. Dodson and Fogg's hung, vich last ewent I think is the most likely to happen first, Sammy.

[*MR. W. salutes, and goes out hastily.*
Curtain.

ONLY A MATTER OF FORM.

SCENE: Parlor in a Country Inn. R., a window; C., a door; L., another door. Present, MRS. BARDELL and TOMMY; MRS. SANDERS, and MRS. ROGERS.

Mrs. Raddle. (Without.) Aggrawatin' thing.

Mr. R. (Without.) My dear, it's not my fault.

Mrs. R. Don't talk to me, you creetur, don't. O! if ever a woman was troubled with a ruffi'nly creetur, that takes a pride and pleasure in disgracing his wife afore strangers, I am that woman!

Mrs. Cluppins. (Without.) You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Raddle.

Mr. R. What havè I been a-doing of?

Mrs. R. Don't talk to me, don't, you brute, for fear I should be perwoked to forgit my sect and strike you.

Enter MRS. RADDLE, C. D., tottering, with MRS. CLUPPINS, and followed by MR. R.

Mrs. Rogers. Lauks, Mary Ann! What's the matter?

Mrs. R. It's put me all over in such a tremble, Betsy. Raddle ain't like a man; he leaves everythink to me. [MRS. R. showing signs of fainting, is carried to the sofa and restoratives are brought; MRS. ROGERS holds her tight round the neck and applies the sal volatile bottle to her nose;

(Gasping.) That'll do! I'm better now.

Mrs. Rogers. Ah, poor thing! I know what her feelin's is, too well.

Mrs. S. Ah, poor thing! So do I.

Mrs. B. And so do I. And I pity her from the bottom of my heart. (*To MRS. RAD.*) But what's been the matter?

Mrs. Rogers. Ah, what has decomposed you, ma'am?

Mrs. Rad. (*Reproachfully.*) I have been a good deal flurried. (*Ladies look indignantly at MR. R.*)

Mr. R. (*Stepping forward.*) Why, the fact is, when we alighted at the door, a dispute arose with the driver of the cabrioily —

[*MRS. R. gives a scream and appears to be fainting again.*]

Mrs. C. You'd better leave us to bring her round, Raddle. She'll never get better as long as you're here.

Ladies. Yes, go, Mr. Raddle, go!

[*Exit RADDLE. They again restore MRS. R.*]

Mrs. B. (*Going to door L.*) You may come in, now, Mr. Raddle. (*Enter RADDLE; MRS. B. and MR. R. stand near door.*) You must be very careful now, Mr. Raddle, how you behave towards your wife. I know you don't mean to be unkind; but Mary Ann is very far from strong, and if you don't take care, you may lose her when you least expect. (*MR. R. sits meekly at L.*) Why, Mrs. Rogers, ma'am, you've never been introduced, I declare! Mr. Raddle, ma'am; (*R. rises and bows.*) Mrs. Cluppins, ma'am; Mrs. Raddle, ma'am. (*MRS. RADDLE smiles sweetly.*)

Mrs. S. Which is Mrs. Cluppins's sister.

Mrs. Rogers. (*Graciously.*) O, indeed!

Mrs. C. I'm sure I'm very happy to have a opportunity of being known to a lady which I have heerd so much in faviour of, as Mrs. Rogers —

Mrs. Rogers. (*Bowing graciously.*) Thank you, Mrs. Cluppins.

Mrs. B. Well, Mr. Raddle, I'm sure you ought to feel very much honored at you and Tommy bein' the only gentlemen to escort so many ladies all the way here. Don't you think he ought, Mrs. Rogers, ma'am?

Mrs. Rogers. O, certainly, ma'am!

All. O, certainly!

Mr. Raddle. Of course I feel it, ma'am. (*Rubbing his hands and brightening up.*) Indeed, to tell you the truth, I said, as we were coming along in the cabrioily —

[*Mrs. R. screams and puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*

Mrs. B. (*Frowning.*) There, Mr. Raddle, you had better not say any more. Ring, and order tea.

[*Mr. R. rings. Enter waiter, c. d.*

Mr. R. (*To waiter.*) Tea for seven.

[*Exit waiter.*

Mrs. R. (*Snappishly.*) The extravagance of the man! What could have been easier than for Tommy to drink out of anybody's cup, or everybody's, if that's all, when the waiter wasn't looking, which would have saved one head of tea, and the tea just as good?

Enter waiter with a tea-tray containing cups and saucers, tea-pot, &c., and bread and butter. MRS. B. is voted into the chair; MRS. ROGERS sits at her right; MRS. RADDLE at her left; next to MRS. RADDLE, MRS. C.; next MRS. S., TOMMY, and MR. RADDLE. MRS. BARDELL pours out tea; general conversation ensues.

Mrs. Rogers. (*Sighing.*) How sweet the country is, to be sure! I almost wish I lived in it always.

Mrs. B. (*Hastily.*) O, you wouldn't like that, ma'am. You wouldn't like it, ma'am.

Mrs. C. O, I should think you was a deal too lively and sought after, to be content with the country, ma'am.

Mrs. Rogers. Perhaps I am, ma'am. (*Sighs.*) Perhaps I am.

Mr. Raddle. (*Cheering up.*) For lone people as have nobody to care for them, or take care of them, or as have been hurt in their mind, or that kind of thing (*looking round*), the country is all very well. The country for a wounded spirit, they say.

Mrs. B. (*Bursting into tears.*) O, take me away! Take me away at once!

[TOMMY B. begins to boo-hoo. They lead MRS. B. away from the table to the sofa, R.]

Mrs. Raddle. (*Fiercely to MRS. ROGERS.*) Would anybody believe, ma'am, that a woman could be married to such a unmanly creetur, which can tamper with a woman's feelings, as *he* does every hour in the day, ma'am?

Mr. R. My dear, I didn't mean anything, my dear.

Mrs. R. (*Scornfully.*) You didn't mean! Go away! I can't bear the sight on you, you brute.

Mrs. C. You must *not* flurify yourself, Mary Ann. You really must consider yourself, my dear, which you never do. Now go away, Raddle; there's a good soul, or you'll only aggravate her.

Mrs. Rogers. (*Applying smelling bottle to MRS. R.'s nose.*) You had better take your tea by yourself, sir, indeed.

Mrs. S. (*At table.*) I think so, too, Mr. Raddle.

[*MR. R. quietly retires. MRS. BARDELL hugs TOMMY and cries over him; the other ladies resume their places at table.*

Mrs. B. (*Recovering.*) I wonder, ladies, how I could have been so foolish!

[*Takes her seat at table, and pours out more tea. The sound of wheels is heard. Ladies rise and go to window at R.*

Mrs. S. More company!

Mrs. Raddle. It's a gentleman.

Mrs. B. Well, if it ain't Mr. Jackson, the young man from Dodson & Fogg's! Why, gracious! Surely Mr. Pickwick can't have paid the damages!

Mrs. C. Or hofferred marriage!

Mrs. Rogers. Dear me, how slow the gentleman is! Why doesn't he make haste?

Enter JACKSON, C. D.

Mrs. B. (*Eagerly.*) Is anything the matter? Has anything taken place, Mr. Jackson?

Mr. Jackson. Nothing whatever, ma'am. How de do, ladies? I have to ask pardon, ladies, for in-

truding ; but the law, ladies, — the law. (*Smiles and bows.*)

Mrs. Rogers. (*Aside to MRS. RADDLE.*) Really, Mrs. Raddle, he is an elegant young man !

Mr. F. I called in Goswell Street, and learning that you were here, took a coach and came on. Our people want you down in the city directly, Mrs. Bardell.

Mrs. B. (*Starting.*) Lor !

Mr. F. Yes. It's very important and pressing business, which can't be postponed on any account. I have kept the coach on purpose for you to go back in.

Mrs. B. How very strange !

All. It is very strange !

Mrs. Raddle. But it must be very important, or Dodson & Fogg would never have sent ; and you ought to go at once, Mrs. Bardell.

Mrs. B. (*Simpering.*) It's *very* vexatious, I'm sure. I don't know whether to go or not.

Mrs. C. You had better go, by all means.

Mrs. B. Well, I suppose I must. (*Persuasively.*) But won't you refresh yourself before going, Mr. Jackson ?

Mr. F. Why, really, Mrs. Bardell —

Mrs. B. Sit down, Mr. Jackson.

[*He sits, and MRS. B. brings him some "refreshment."*]

Mr. F. (*Sipping.*) Sad thing about these costs of our people's — ain't it? Your bill of costs, I mean.

Mrs. B. I'm very sorry they can't get them ; but if you law-gentlemen do these things on speculation, why, you must get a loss now and then, you know.

Mr. F. You gave them a *cognovit* for the amount of your costs, after the trial, I am told.

Mrs. B. Yes, just as a matter of form.

Mr. J. (*Dryly.*) Certainly. Quite a matter of form. (*Finishes his glass.*) Quite. But there ain't much time to lose, ma'am, and I've got a friend outside —

Mrs. B. O, ask your friend to come in, sir. Pray ask him to come in, sir.

Mr. J. (*Embarrassed.*) Why, thank'ee. I'd rather not. He's not much used to ladies' society, and it makes him bashful. If you'll order the waiter to deliver him anything short, he won't drink it off at once — won't he! Only try him! (*Mrs. B. sends servant out to J.'s friend; they all "take something."*) I'm afraid it's time to go, ladies.

[*All rise; Mrs. B. and TOMMY, Mrs. C., Mrs. S. and MR. J. go towards c. d.*

[*Curtain.*

“ ALL RIGHT AND TIGHT.”

SCENE: The Lodge of “ The Fleet.” *Present, MR. PICKWICK and SAM WELLER, with other prisoners. Enter, R., constable, carrying a stout stick.*

Constable. (Holding the door open.) Come in, ladies.

Enter MRS. BARDELL, leaning on MR. JACKSON’S arm, and leading TOMMY; MRS. SANDERS and the rest of the party follow.

Mrs. B. (Stopping.) What place is this?

Mr. F. (Hurrying her on.) Only one of our public offices, ma’am. *(Looks around to see that the others are following.)* Look sharp, Isaac.

Isaac. (Closing door.) Safe and sound.

Mr. F. (Looking exultantly round.) Here we are, at last. All right and tight, Mrs. Bardell!

Mrs. B. (Alarmed.) What do you mean?

Mr. F. (Drawing her to one side.) Just this, — don’t be frightened, Mrs. Bardell, — there never was a more delicate man than Dodson, ma’am, or a more humane man than Fogg. It was their duty, in the way of business, to take you in execution for them costs; but they were anxious to spare your feelings as much as they could. What a comfort it must be to you to think how it’s been done! This is the Fleet, ma’am. Wish you good day, Mrs. Bardell. Good day, Tommy!

[*Exeunt JACKSON and ISAAC. MRS. B. faints; TOMMY roars; MR. P. turns*

away and exit; SAM, leaning against the wall, mockingly takes off his hat.

Turnkey. (To SAM.) Don't bother the woman; she's just come in.

Sam. (Putting on his hat quickly.) A pris'ner! Who's the plaintives? What for? Speak up, old feller.

Turnkey. Dodson & Fogg. Execution on *cognovit* for costs.

Sam. (Rushing to door, L., and calling off.) Here, Job, Job!

Job. (Without.) Ay, ay!

Sam. Run to Mr. Perker's, Job. I want him directly; I see some good in this. Here's a game. Hooray! Were's the gov'nor?

[Exit SAM. Curtain.]

A GENERAL SETTLEMENT.*

SCENE: MR. PICKWICK'S Room in "The Fleet."
Present, MR. P. and SAM. A knock is heard.

Sam. (*Opening c. d., and announcing the visitor.*) Mr. Perker, sir. (*To MR. PERKER, who enters.*) Wery glad you've looked in accidentally, sir. I rayther think the gov'nor wants to have a vord and a half with you, sir. (*MR. PERKER nods to SAM, to show that he understands, and beckoning to him, whispers in his ear; SAM starts back in surprise.*) You don't mean that 'ere, sir?

[*MR. PERKER nods and smiles; SAM looks at him, then at MR. PICKWICK, then at the ceiling; laughs heartily, catches up his hat from the carpet and goes off,*
 C. D.

Mr. Pickwick. (*Looking at PERKER in astonishment.*) What does this mean? What has put Sam into this most extraordinary state?

Mr. Perker. O, nothing, nothing. Come, my dear sir, draw up your chair to the table. I have a good deal to say to you.

* This may be used with other SCENES, as follows:—

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|
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[*Takes out a bundle of papers tied with red tape, and places it on the table, c.*

Mr. Pick. What papers are those?

Mr. Perk. (*Undoing the knot with his teeth.*)
The papers in Bardell and Pickwick. (MR. PICKWICK *pushes away his chair, throws himself back in it, folds his arms, and looks sternly at MR. PERKER.*)
You don't like to hear the name of the cause?

Mr. Pick. No, I do not, indeed.

Mr. Perk. Sorry for that, because it will form the subject of our conversation.

Mr. Pick. (*Hastily.*) I would rather that the subject should be never mentioned between us, Perker.

Mr. Perk. Pooh, pooh, my dear sir, it must be mentioned. I have come here on purpose. Now, are you ready to hear what I have to say, my dear sir? No hurry; if you are not, I can wait. I have the morning's papers here. Your time shall be mine. There!

[*Throws himself back in his chair, l. of table, and makes a show of reading.*

Mr. Pick. (*Drawing chair to r. of table.*) Well, well. Say what you have to say; it's the old story, I suppose?

Mr. Perk. (*Folding the paper, slowly, and putting it in his pocket.*) With a difference, my dear sir; with a difference. Mrs. Bardell, the plaintiff in the action, is within these walls, sir.

Mr. Pick. I know it.

Mr. Perk. Very good. And you know how she comes here, I suppose; I mean on what grounds, and at whose suit?

Mr. Pick. (*Carelessly.*) Yes; at least I have heard Sam's account of the matter.

Mr. Perk. Sam's account of the matter is, I will venture to say, a perfectly correct one. Well, now, my dear sir, the first question I have to ask is, whether this woman is to remain here?

Mr. Pick. To remain here! (MR. PERKER leans back and looks steadily at him.) To remain here, my dear sir! How can you ask me? It rests with Dodson & Fogg; you know that very well.

Mr. Perk. (*Firmly.*) I know nothing of the kind. It does *not* rest with Dodson & Fogg; you know the men, my dear sir, as well as I do. It rests solely, wholly, and entirely with you.

Mr. Pick. (*Rising nervously and sitting again.*) With me?

Mr. Perk. (*Rapping his snuff-box, opening it, taking a pinch of snuff, and closing it again.*) With you. I say, my dear sir, that her speedy liberation or perpetual imprisonment rests with you, and with you alone. Hear me out, if you please, and do not be so very energetic, for it will only put you into a perspiration, and do no good whatever. I say that nobody but you can rescue her from this den of wretchedness; and that you can only do that, by paying the costs of this suit — both of plaintiff and defendant — into the hands of those sharks, Dodson & Fogg. (MR. PICKWICK appears very indignant.) Now, pray be quiet, my dear sir. I have seen the woman this morning. By paying the costs, you can obtain a full release and discharge from the damages; and further, a voluntary

statement, under her hand, in the form of a letter to me, that this business was, from the very first, fomented, and encouraged, and brought about, by these men, Dodson & Fogg; that she deeply regrets ever having been the instrument of annoyance or injury to you; and that she entreats me to intercede with you, and implore your pardon.

Mr. Pick. (*Indignantly.*) If I pay her costs for her. A valuable document, indeed!

Mr. Perk. (*Triumphantly.*) No "if" in the case, my dear sir. There is the letter (*takes it from the bundle and lays it before MR. P.*) I speak of. Brought to my office, by another woman, at nine o'clock this morning, before I had set foot in this place, or held any communication with Mrs. Bardell, upon my honor.

Mr. Pick. (*Mildly.*) Is this all you have to say to me?

Mr. Perk. Not quite. You have now an opportunity, on easy terms, of placing yourself in a much higher position than you ever could by remaining here; which would only be reputed by people who didn't know you, to sheer, dogged, wrong-headed, brutal obstinacy. Can you hesitate to avail yourself of it, when it restores you to your friends, your old pursuits; your health and your amusements; when it liberates your faithful and attached servant, and above all, when it enables you to take the very magnanimous revenge of releasing this woman from the scene of misery to which she has been consigned? Now, I ask you, my dear sir, will you let slip the occasion of attaining all these objects, and doing all this good, for the paltry con-

sideration of a few pounds finding their way into the pockets of a couple of rascals? Think of this, my dear sir; turn it over in your mind as long as you please; I wait most patiently for your answer.

[MR. PERKER *takes snuff*; MR. PICKWICK *is about to reply when a knock is heard,*
C. D.

Mr. Pick. Dear, dear, what an annoyance that door is! Who is that?

Sam. (*Putting in his head.*) Me, sir!

Mr. Pick. I can't speak to you just now, Sam. I am engaged at this moment, Sam.

Sam. Beg your pardon, sir. But here's a lady here, sir, as says she's somethin' wery partickler to disclose.

Mr. Pick. I can't see any lady.

Sam. (*Shaking his head.*) I wouldn't make too sure o' that, sir. If you know'd who was near, sir, I rayther think you'd change your note; as the hawk remarked to himself ven he heerd the robin red-breast a-singin' round the corner.

Mr. Pick. Who is it?

Sam. (*Holding the door.*) Will you see her, sir?

Mr. Pick. (*Looking at PERKER.*) I suppose I must.

Sam. Well, then, all in, to begin! Sound the gong, draw up the cürtain, and enter the two conspirators.

[*Throws open the door*; MR. WINKLE *hurries in, leading a lady, who is dressed as a bride; her maid follows.*

Mr. Pick. (*Rising.*) Miss Arabella Allen!

Mr. Winkle. (*Dropping on his knees.*) No;

Mrs. Winkle. Pardon, my dear friend, pardon.*

[*MR. PICKWICK gazes around him in silence; SAM surveys the scene with satisfaction.*

Mrs. Win. (*In a low voice.*) O, Mr. Pickwick, can you forgive my imprudence?

[*MR. P. hastily removes his spectacles, seizes her by both hands, and kisses her several times; then holding one of her hands, he extends the other to MR. WINKLE.*

Mr. Pick. Winkle, you're an audacious young dog — get up. (*MR. W. rises; MR. P. slaps him on the back; then shakes hands with MR. PERKER; the latter salutes MRS. W. and the maid; shakes hands heartily with MR. W., and takes a prodigious pinch of snuff.*) Why, my dear girl, how has all this come about? Come, sit down, and let me hear it all. How well she looks, doesn't she, Perker?

Mr. Perk. Delightful, my dear sir. (*To WINKLE.*) If I were not a married man myself, I should be disposed to envy you, you dog.

[*Punches W. in the ribs; W. returns it; all laugh heartily; SAM, in the background, kisses MARY, and joins in the laugh.*

Mrs. W. (*Turning.*) I can never be grateful enough to you, Sam, I am sure. I shall not forget your exertions in the garden at Clifton.

* MR. PERKER, L. C.; MR. PICKWICK, R.; MR. WINKLE, kneeling to him; MRS. WINKLE, R. C.; SAM and MARY up the stage, C.

Sam. Don't say nothin' wotever about it, ma'am. I only assisted natur', ma'am, as the doctor said to the boy's mother, arter he'd bled him to death.

Mr. Pick. (To MRS. W.) Sit down, my dear. (*They sit, R. C.*) Now then, — how long have you been married, eh? (MRS. W. *looks bashfully at MR. W.*)

Mr. W. Only three days.

Mr. Pick. Only three days, eh? Why, what have you been doing these three months?

Mr. Perk. Ah, to be sure! Come! Account for this idleness. You see Pickwick's only astonishment is, that it wasn't all over months ago.

Mr. W. (*Looking at MRS. W.*) Why, the fact is that I could not persuade Bella to run away, for a long time; and when I had persuaded her, it was a long time more before we could find an opportunity. Mary had to give a month's warning, too, before she could leave the place next door, and we couldn't possibly have done it without her assistancè.

Mr. Pick. (*Putting on his spectacles and looking from one to the other.*) Upon my word! You seem to have been very systematic in your proceedings. And is your brother acquainted with all this, my dear?

Mrs. W. O, no, no. Dear Mr. Pickwick, he must only know it from you — from your lips alone. He is so violent, so prejudiced, that I fear the consequences dreadfully.

Mr. Perk. (*Gravely.*) Ah, to be sure. You must take this matter in hand for them, my dear sir. You must prevent mischief, my dear sir. Hot blood — hot blood.

[*Shakes his head doubtfully and takes snuff.*

Mr. Pick. (*Gently.*) You forget, my love, that I am a prisoner.

Mrs. W. No, indeed, I do not, my dear sir. I never have forgotten it. I have never ceased to think how great your sufferings must have been in this shocking place; but I hoped that what no consideration for yourself would induce you to do, a regard to our happiness might. If my brother hears of this, first, from you, I feel certain we shall be reconciled. He is my only relation in the world, Mr. Pickwick, and unless you plead for me, I fear I have lost even him. I have done wrong, very, very wrong, I know.

[*Weeps.* *MR. P. rises and walks nervously about, takes off his spectacles and rubs them, scratches his head, &c.*

Mr. Perk. Another reason, my dear sir, for acceding to the proposition which I just made to you. Leave this place, Mr. Pickwick, as soon as you can, go down to Mrs. Winkle's brother and acquaint him by word of mouth with the whole circumstances of the case. Come, my dear sir, say you will.

[*All crowd around and urge MR. PICKWICK.*

Mr. Pick. Well, well, I consent. (*Turns and catches MRS. W. in his arms.*) I don't know how it is, my dear, but I have always been very fond of you from the first, and I can't find it in my heart to stand in the way of your happiness; do what you please with me — (*A succession of very loud raps at the door, c.*)

Mr. Perk. Dear me, what's that?

Mr. Pick. I think it is a knock at the door. (*More raps, very loud and without cessation.*) Dear me! Sam, don't you hear a knock? (*More raps, and louder.*)

Sam. Ay, ay, sir. (*Goes towards door; raps continue.*)

Mr. Pick. (*Stopping his ears.*) It's quite dreadful. (*To MRS. W.*) Leave us a moment, my dear; and you too, Winkle. (*They go out, R.*) Make haste, Sam; we shall have the panels beaten in.

[*SAM hurries to door, c., and throws it wide open; an enormously fat boy, dressed as servant, stands before the door, with his eyes shut.*

Sam. Wot's the matter? (*BOY nods once, and snores feebly.*) Where do you come from? (*BOY motionless, breathing heavily.*) I say! Where do you come from? (*No answer; SAM is about to close the door, when the BOY opens his eyes, winks several times, sneezes, and raises his hand as if to rap again; finding the door open, he gazes about him, and at last fixes his eyes on SAM.*) What the devil do you knock in that way for?

Boy. (*Slowly and sleepily.*) What way?

Sam. Why, like forty hackney-coachmen.

Boy. Because master said, I wasn't to leave off knocking till they opened the door, for fear I should go to sleep.

Sam. Well, wot message have you brought?

Boy. He's down stairs.

Sam. Who?

Boy. Master. He wants to know whether you're at home.

Sam. (*Stepping to window, L., looking out, and beckoning to somebody below.*) That's your master in the carriage, I suppose?

[*BOY nods; enter MR. WARDLE hastily; he passes SAM and comes down the stage. Exit SAM, C. D. The BOY enters, and standing, R. U. E., goes to sleep.*

Mr. Wardle. Pickwick! Your hand, my boy! Why have I never heard until the day before yesterday of your suffering yourself to be cooped up here? (*Looking about him.*) And why did you let him do it, Perker?

Mr. Perk. (*Smiling and taking snuff.*) I couldn't help it, my dear sir. You know how obstinate he is.

Mr. War. Of course I do, of course I do. I am heartily glad to see him, notwithstanding. I will not lose sight of him again, in a hurry. (*Shakes MR. PICKWICK heartily by the hand, and then MR. PERKER, and throws himself into a chair.**) Well, here are pretty goings on—a pinch of snuff, Perker, my boy—never were such times, eh?

Mr. Pick. What do you mean?

Mr. War. Mean! Why, I think the girls are all running mad; that's no news, you'll say? perhaps it's not; but it's true, for all that.

Mr. Perk. You have not come all this distance to tell us *that*. my dear sir—have you?

Mr. War. No, not altogether; though it was the main cause of my coming. How's Arabella?

* The following, as far as *Enter DODSON & FOGG*, may be omitted, if the dialogue should appear to be too long.

Mr. Pick. Very well, and not very far off. She'll be delighted to see you, I am sure.

Mr. War. Black-eyed little jilt! I had a great idea of marrying her myself, one of these odd days. But I am glad of it, too — very glad.

Mr. Pick. How did the intelligence reach you?

Mr. War. O, it came to my girls, of course. Arabella wrote that she had made a stolen match without her husband's father's consent, and that she intended to ask you to go down to get it when his refusing it couldn't prevent the match, and all the rest of it. I thought it a very good time to say something serious to *my* girls; so I said what a dreadful thing it was that children should marry without their parents' consent, and so forth; but, bless your hearts, I couldn't make the least impression upon them. They thought it such a much more dreadful thing that there should have been a wedding without bridesmaids, that I might as well have preached to my boy Joe, there. (*Laughs long and heartily.*) But this is not the best of it, it seems. This is only half the love-making and plotting that have been going forward. We have been walking on mines for the last six months, and they've sprung at last.

Mr. Pick. (*Starting.*) What do you mean? No other secret marriage, I hope?

Mr. War. No, no; not so bad as that — no.

Mr. Pick. What then? Am *I* interested in it?

Mr. War. Yes, you are.

Mr. Pick. (*Anxiously.*) How? In what way?

Mr. War. Really, you're such a fiery sort of young fellow, that I am almost afraid to tell you; but, however,

if Perker will sit between us to prevent mischief, I'll venture. Another pinch of snuff, Perker, if you please. The fact is, that my daughter Bella — Bella, that married young Trundle, you know —

Mr. Pick. (*Impatiently.*) Yes, yes, we know.

Mr. War. Don't alarm me at the very beginning. My daughter Bella — Emily having gone to bed with a headache, after she had read Arabella's letter to me, — sat herself down by my side, and began to talk over this marriage affair. "Well, pa," she says, "what do you think of it?" "Why, my dear," I said, "I suppose it's all very well; I hope it's for the best." "It's quite a marriage of affection, pa," said Bella, after a short silence. "Yes, my dear," said I, "but such marriages do not always turn out the happiest."

Mr. Pick. (*Warmly.*) I question that.

Mr. War. Very good; question anything you like when it's your turn to speak, but don't interrupt me.

Mr. Pick. I beg your pardon.

Mr. War. Granted. "I am sorry to hear you express your opinion against marriages of affection, pa," said Bella, coloring a little. "I was wrong; I ought not to have said so, my dear, either," said I, patting her cheek as kindly as a rough old fellow like me could pat it, "for your mother's was one, and so was yours." "It's not that I meant, pa," said Bella. "The fact is, pa, I wanted to speak to you about Emily." (*MR. PICKWICK starts.*) What's the matter now?

Mr. Pick. Nothing. Pray go on.

Mr. War. (*Abruptly.*) I never could spin out a story. It must come out, sooner or later. The long

and short of it is, that Bella at last mustered up courage to tell me that Emily was very unhappy; that she and your young friend Snodgrass had been in constant correspondence and communication ever since last Christmas; that she had very dutifully made up her mind to run away with him; but that, having some compunctions of conscience on the subject, they had thought it better to pay me the compliment of asking whether I would have any objection to their being married in the usual matter-of-fact manner. There, now (*testily*), Mr. Pickwick, if you can make it convenient to reduce your eyes to their usual size again, and to let me hear what you think we ought to do, I shall feel rather obliged to you.

Mr. Pick. (*Muttering to himself.*) Snodgrass! — since last Christmas!

Mr. War. Since last Christmas; that's plain enough, and very bad spectacles we must have worn not to have discovered it before.

Mr. Pick. (*Ruminating.*) I don't understand it. I really cannot understand it.

Mr. War. It's easy enough to understand. If you had been a younger man, you would have been in the secret long ago. Now, the question is, what's to be done?

Mr. Pick. What have *you* done?

Mr. War. I!

Mr. Pick. I mean what did you do when your married daughter told you this?

Mr. War. O, I made a fool of myself, of course.

Mr. Perk. (*Impatiently.*) Just so. That's very natural; but how?

Mr. War. I went into a great passion, and frightened my mother into a fit.

Mr. Perk. That was judicious; and what else?

Mr. War. I fretted and fumed all next day, and raised a great disturbance. At last I hired a carriage at Muggleton, and, putting my own horses to it, came up to town, under pretence of bringing Emily to see Arabella.

Mr. Pick. Miss Wardle is with you, then?

Mr. War. To be sure she is. She is at Osborne's Hotel in the Adelphi, at this moment, unless your enterprising friend has run away with her since I came out this morning.

Mr. Perk. You are reconciled, then?

Mr. War. Not a bit of it. She has been crying and moping ever since, except last evening, when she made a great parade of writing a letter, that I pretended to take no notice of.

Mr. Perk. (*Taking snuff, and looking from one to the other.*) You want my advice in this matter, I suppose?

Mr. War. (*Looking at MR. PICKWICK.*) I suppose so.

Mr. Pick. Certainly.

Mr. Perk. (*Rising and pushing his chair back.*) Well, then, my advice is, that you both dine together to-day, — Mr. Pickwick will be free before dinner-time, — and talk this matter over between you. If you have not settled it by the next time I see you, I'll tell you what to do.

Mr. W. (*Half offended.*) This is satisfactory!

Mr. Perk. Pooh, pooh, my dear sir. I know you

both a great deal better than you know yourselves. You have settled it already, to all intents and purposes. (*Pokes MR. WAR. and then MR. PICK. in the waist-coat with his snuff-box; all three laugh and shake hands.*) Now go, Mr. Wardle, for I'm tired of you; and, moreover, I have business to finish with Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. War. Very well. (*Rises.*) Good morning! Good morning, Mr. Pickwick. I shall expect you at Osborne's at five. Now, Joe!

[*JOE, who has been asleep at R. U. E., wakes after being thoroughly shaken, and ex-cunt MR. W. and JOE, C. D. MR. PICKWICK and MR. PERKER sit at the table, and begin to examine papers, when another knock is heard, C. D.*

Mr. Perk. Come in! (*SAM enters, and closes the door mysteriously.*) What's the matter?

Sam. You're wanted, sir.

Mr. Perk. Who wants me? (*SAM looks at MR. P. and coughs.*) Who wants me? Can't you speak?

Sam. (*Angrily.*) Why, it's that rascal Dodson; and Fogg is with him.

Mr. Perk. Bless my life? Is it as late as that? (*Looks at his watch.*) I appointed them to be here at half past eleven, to settle up this matter of yours, Mr. Pickwick; and they're come. Would you like to step into the next room?

Mr. Pick. No, Perker, I will remain where I am. (*Indignantly.*) Dodson & Fogg ought to be ashamed to look me in the face, instead of my being ashamed to see them.

Mr. Perk. Very well, my dear sir, very well. I can only say, that, if you expect either Dodson or Fogg to exhibit any symptom of shame or confusion at having to look you, or anybody else, in the face, you are the most sanguine man in your expectations that I ever met with. Show them in, Sam. [*Exit SAM.*]

Enter DODSON, followed by FOGG.

Mr. Perk. (*Inclining his pen towards MR. PICKWICK.*) You have seen Mr. Pickwick, I believe?

Dodson. (*In a loud voice.*) How do you do, Mr. Pickwick?

Fogg. Dear me, how do you do, Mr. Pickwick? I hope you are well, sir. (*Draws a chair to table, and takes papers from his coat pocket; MR. PICKWICK bends his head slightly, rises, and walks away to the window.*) There's no occasion for Mr. Pickwick to move, Mr. Perker. (*Unties bundle.*) Mr. Pickwick is pretty well acquainted with these proceedings; there are no secrets between us, I think. He! he! he!

Dod. Not many, I think. Ha! ha! ha!

Fogg. (*Facetiously.*) We shall make Mr. Pickwick pay for peeping. (*Unfolds paper.*) The amount of the taxed costs is one hundred and thirty-three, six, four, Mr. Perker.

[*MR. PERKER and he compare papers.*]

Dod. (*Affably.*) I don't think you are looking quite so stout as when I had the pleasure of seeing you last, Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Pick. Possibly not, sir. I believe I am not, sir. I have been persecuted and annoyed by Scoundrels of late, sir.

Mr. Perk. (*Coughing violently.*) Wouldn't you like to look at the morning paper, Mr. Pickwick?

Mr. Pick. No;—I thank you.

Dod. True; I dare say you *have* been annoyed in the Fleet; there are some odd gentry here.

[*MR. PERKER has, meantime, drawn a check and given it to FOGG, who puts it triumphantly in his pocket-book.*

Fogg. (*Drawing on his gloves.*) Now, Mr. Dodson, I am at your service.

Dod. (*Rising.*) Very good. I am quite ready.

Fogg. I am very happy to have had the pleasure of making Mr. Pickwick's acquaintance. I hope you don't think quite so badly of us, Mr. Pickwick, as when we first had the pleasure of seeing you.

Dod. I hope not. Mr. Pickwick now knows us better, I trust. Whatever your opinion of gentlemen of our profession may be, I beg to assure you, sir, that I bear no ill-will or vindictive feeling towards you for the sentiments you thought proper to express in our office, on the occasion to which my partner has referred.

Fogg. O, no, no; nor I.

Dod. Our conduct, sir, will speak for itself, and justify itself, I hope, upon every occasion. I wish you good-morning, sir.

Fogg. (*Putting his umbrella under his arm, taking off his right glove, and extending his hand to MR. P.*) Good-morning, Mr. Pickwick.

[*MR. P. thrusts his hands under his coat-tails and gazes at FOGG with great scorn.*

Mr. Perk. (*Hastily.*) Sam, open the door.

Mr. Pick. Wait one instant. Perker, I *will* speak.

Mr. Perk. (*Rising nervously.*) My dear sir, pray let the matter rest where it is. Mr. Pickwick, I beg —

Mr. Pick. (*Hastily.*) I will not be put down, sir. Mr. Dodson, you have addressed some remarks to me. (*DODSON bows meekly and smiles.*) And your partner has tendered me his hand, and you have both assumed a tone of forgiveness and high-mindedness, which is an extent of impudence that I was not prepared for, even in you.

Dod. What, sir!

Fogg. What, sir!

Mr. Pick. Do you know that I have been the victim of your plots and conspiracies? Do you know that I am the man whom you have been imprisoning and robbing? Do you know that you were the attorneys for the plaintiff, in Bardell and Pickwick?

Dod. Yes, sir, we do know it.

Fogg. (*Slapping his pocket.*) Of course we know it, sir.

Mr. Pick. I see that you recollect it with satisfaction. Although I have been long anxious to tell you, in plain terms, what my opinion of you is, I should have let even this opportunity pass, in deference to my friend Perker's wishes, but for the unwarrantable tone you have assumed, and your insolent familiarity, — (*turning fiercely upon FOGG, who retreats towards the door*) — I say insolent familiarity, sir.

Dod. (*Between FOGG and the door.*) Take care, sir! Let him assault you, Mr. Fogg; don't return it on any account.

Fogg. (*Retreating farther.*) No, no, I won't return it.

Mr. Pick. You are a well-matched pair of mean, rascally, pettifogging robbers.

Mr. Perk. Well, is that all?

Mr. Pick. It is all summed up in that; they are mean, rascally, pettifogging robbers.

Mr. Perk. (*In a conciliatory tone.*) There! my dear sirs, he has said all he has to say; now pray go. Sam, *is* that door open?

Sam. Yes, sir.

Mr. Perk. There, there — good morning — good morning; now pray, my dear sirs, — Sam, the door! (*Pushes them towards the door.*) This way, my dear sirs — now pray don't prolong this — dear me — Sam, the door!

Dod. (*Putting on his hat, and looking towards MR. PICKWICK.*) If there's law in England, sir, you shall smart for this.

Mr. Pick. You are a couple of mean —

Fogg. Remember, sir, you pay dearly for this.

Mr. Pick. Rascally, pettifogging robbers. (*Exeunt DODSON and FOGG; MR. P. runs after them.*) Robbers! Robbers! (*Returns tranquilly into the room.*) There! *there's* a weight taken off my mind; now, Perker, I feel perfectly comfortable and happy.

[PERKER *takes snuff, and falls to laughing heartily.*

Mr. Perk. I suppose, my dear sir, I ought to be very angry with you; but, upon my word, I can't think of the business seriously, yet; when I can, I will be.

Mr. Pick. Well, now, let me have a settlement with you.

Mr. Perk. (*Laughing.*) Of the same kind as the last?

Mr. Pick. (*Shaking him heartily by the hand.*) Not exactly. I only mean a pecuniary settlement. You have done me many acts of kindness that I can never repay, and have no wish to, for I prefer continuing the obligation. Sit down, sir, sit down.

[*They sit at table, c., and examine their accounts.* *Curtain.*



MRS. WELLER'S WILL.



MRS. WELLER'S WILL.*



SCENE: The Sitting-Room of MR. WELLER'S House, as in Vol. I. page 73. *Time, the day after the funeral. Present, MR. W. and SAM.*

Mr. Weller. Samivel! I've found it, Sammy. I thought it was there.

Sam. Thought wot wos were?

Mr. W. Your mother-in-law's Vill, Sammy. In wirtue o' vich, them arrangements is to be made as I told you on, last night, respectin' the funs.

Sam. Wot, didn't she tell you were it wos?

Mr. W. Not a bit on it, Sammy. We wos a-adjustin' our little differences, and I wos a-cheerin' her spirits, and bearin' her up, so that I forgot to ask anythin' about it. I don't know as I should ha' done it indeed, if I had remembered it, for it's a rum sort o' thing, Sammy, to

* This can be used, if desired, in connection with other Scenes in which SAM WELLER appears, in the following order:—

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. SAM visits his Mother-in-law. | Vol. 1. p. 28 |
| 2. SAM WELLER'S Valentine. | " 1. " 47 |
| 3. A Family Party. | " 2. " 258 |
| 4. An Incomprehensible Letter. | " 1. " 69 |
| 5. The Widower. | " " " 73 |
| 6. MRS. WELLER'S Will. | " 2. " 299 |

go a hankerin' arter anybody's property, ven you're assistin' 'em in illness. It's like helpin' an outside passenger up, ven he's been pitched off a coach, and puttin' your hand in his pocket, vile you ask him, vith a sigh, how he finds his-self, Sammy. (*Takes out his pocket-book, unclasps it, and draws out a dirty paper covered with letters and figures.*) This here is the dockyment, Sammy. I found it in the little black tea-pot, on the top shelf o' the bar-closet. She used to keep bank-notes there afore she vos married, Samivel. I've seen her take the lid off, to pay a bill, many and many a time. Poor creetur, she might ha' filled all the tea-pots in the house vith vills, and not have inconvenienced herself neither, for she took wery little of anythin' in that vay lately, 'cept on the Temperance nights, ven they just laid a foundation o' tea to put the spirits a-top on!

Sam. Wot does it say?

Mr. W. Jist vot I told you, my boy. Two hundred pounds vurth o' reduced counsels to my son-in-law, Samivel, and all the rest o' my property, of ev'ry kind and description votsoever, to my husband, Mr. Tony Veller, who I appint as my sole eggzekiter.

Sam. That's all — is it?

Mr. W. That's all. And I s'pose as it's all right and satisfactory to you and me, as is the only parties interested, ve may as vell put this bit o' paper into the fire. [*Stirs the fire, preparatory to burning the will.*]

Sam. (*Snatching the paper from him.*) Wot are you a-doin' on, you lunatic? You're a nice eggzekiter, you are.

Mr. W. (*Looking sternly round, with the poker in his hand.*) Vy not?

Sam. Vy not! 'Cos it must be proved, and probated, and swore to, and all manner o' formalities.

Mr. W. (*Laying down poker.*) You don't mean that?

Sam. (*Buttoning the will in his side pocket.*) I do mean it.

Mr. W. (*After meditating a moment.*) Then I'll tell you wot it is: this is a case for that 'ere confidential pal o' the Chancellorship's. Pell must look into this, Sammy. He's the man for a difficult question at law. Ve'll have this here brought afore the Solvent Court directly, Samivel.

Sam. (*Irritably.*) I never did see such a addle-headed old creetur! Old Baileys, and Solvent Courts, and alleybis, and ev'ry species o' gammon always a-runnin' through his brain! You'd better get your out-o' door clothes on, and come to town about this business, than stand a preachin' there, about wot you don't understand nothin' on. (*Rises and puts on his hat.*)

Mr. W. Wery good, Sammy. I'm quite agreeable to anythin' as vill hexpedite business, Sammy. But mind this here, my boy: nobody but Pell, nobody but Pell as a legal adviser.

[*Rises, and ties on his shawl before the glass.*]

Sam. I don't want anybody else.

Mr. W. And as four heads is better than two, Sammy, and as all this here property is a wery great temptation to a legal gen'l'm'n, ve'll take a couple o' friends o' mine vith us, as'll be wery soon down upon him if he comes anythin' irreg'lar. They're the wery

best judges, (*takes up his over-coat*), — the wery best judges of a horse you ever know'd.

Sam. And of a lawyer, too?

Mr. W. (*Dogmatically.*) The man as can form a ackerate judgment of a animal, can form a ackerate judgment o' anythin'.

Sam. (*Near the door.*) Now, are you a-comin'?

Mr. W. (*Struggling into his over-coat.*) Vait a minit, Sammy, — vait a minit. Ven you grow as old as your father; you von't get into your veskit quite as easy as you do now, my boy.

Sam. If I couldn't get into it easier than that, I'm blessed if I'd veer vun at all.

Mr. W. (*Gravely.*) You think so now; but you'll find that as you get vider, you'll get viser. Vidth and visdom, Sammy, always grows together. (*His coat being on, he buttons the lower button, stops to take breath, and brushes his hat with his elbow.*) All ready now, Samivel.

[*Exeunt. Curtain.*]

MISCELLANEOUS.



A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

SOME VALUABLE ADVICE.

JEALOUSY.

A WICTIM O' CONNUBIALITY.



MISCELLANEOUS.



A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.*

SCENE: Parlor of an Inn. *Time, evening; on table, c., two candles. Enter MR. PICKWICK and SAM, followed by MR. MAGNUS.*

Mr. Magnus. Do you stop here, sir?

Mr. Pickwick. I do.

Mr. M. Dear me, I never knew anything like these extraordinary coincidences. Why, I stop here, too. I hope we shall pass the evening together.

Mr. P. With pleasure. I shall be very happy to have your company, sir.

Mr. M. Ah, it's a good thing for both of us — isn't it? Company, you see — company is — is — it's a very different thing from solitude — ain't it?

Sam. There's no denyin' that 'ere. That's what I call a self-evident proposition, as the dog's-meat man

* Arrange for an entertainment, as follows: —

- I. A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.
- II. A ROMANTIC ADVENTURE, Vol. I. p. 91.
- III. SOME VALUABLE ADVICE,
- IV. JEALOUSY.

said when the housemaid told him he warn't a gentleman.

Mr. M. (*Eyeing SAM superciliously.*) Ah, friend of yours, sir?

Mr. P. (*In a low tone.*) Not exactly a friend. The fact is, he is my servant; but I allow him to take a good many liberties; for, between ourselves, I flatter myself he is an original, and I am rather proud of him.

Mr. M. Ah, that, you see, is a matter of taste. I am not fond of anything original. I don't like it; don't see the necessity for it. (*Abruptly.*) What's your name, sir?

Mr. P. Here is my card, sir. [*Exit SAM.*]

Mr. M. Ah! Pickwick; very good. I like to know a man's name, it saves so much trouble. That's my card, sir. Magnus, you will perceive, sir — Magnus is my name. It's rather a good name, I think, sir.

Mr. P. (*Smiling.*) A very good name, indeed.

Mr. M. Yes, I think it is. There's a good name before it, too, you will observe. Permit me, sir — if you hold the card a little slanting, this way, you catch the light upon the up-stroke. There — Peter Magnus — sounds well, I think, sir. (*They sit.*)

Mr. P. Very.

Mr. M. Curious circumstance about those initials, sir. You will observe — P. M. — post meridian. In hasty notes to intimate acquaintance, I sometimes sign myself "Afternoon." It amuses my friends very much, Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. P. (*Dryly.*) It is calculated to afford them the highest gratification, I should conceive. (*A knock.*)

Mr. M. Come in. (*Door opens, c., and discloses a corpulent man surrounded by baggage.*) Ah, my luggage! Bring it in. (*Man does so.*) Is it all there?

Man. All right, sir.

Mr. M. (*Looking up.*) Have you the red bag?

Man. All right, sir.

Mr. M. And the striped bag?

Man. Yes, sir.

Mr. M. And the brown-paper parcel?

Man. Here it is, sir.

Mr. M. And the leather hat-box?

Man. Here, sir.

Mr. M. Are you sure? Excuse me, Mr. Pickwick. I am quite satisfied from that man's manner, that that leather hat-box is not there. (*Goes up and examines luggage.*) Ah, yes; here it is. (*To man.*) Well, put them down there by the door. (*MAN obeys and turns to go out.*)

Mr. P. Waiter!

Man. Yes, sir.

Mr. P. Is there any gentleman of the name of Tupman, here?

Man. No, sir.

Mr. P. Nor any gentleman of the name of Snodgrass?

Man. No, sir.

Mr. P. Nor Winkle?

Man. No, sir. (*Turns again to go.*)

Mr. P. (*To MR. M.*) My friends have not arrived to-day, sir. We shall pass the evening alone, then. Waiter, a bottle of port. [*Exit MAN.*]

[*They sit at table, c.; the bottle of port is brought, and they drink to one another.*

Mr. M. (After surveying *MR. P.* for some moments through his spectacles.) And what do you think — what *do* you think, *Mr. Pickwick* — I have come down here for?

Mr. P. Upon my word, it is wholly impossible for me to guess; on business, perhaps?

Mr. M. Partly right, sir, but partly wrong, at the the same time. Try again, *Mr. Pickwick*.

Mr. P. Really, I must throw myself on your mercy, to tell me or not, as you may think best; for I should never guess, if I were to try all night.

Mr. M. (With a bashful titter.) Why, then, — he — he — he! — what should you think, *Mr. Pickwick*, if I had come down here, to make a proposal, sir, eh? He — he — he!

Mr. P. (Smiling.) Think! that you are very likely to succeed.

Mr. M. Ah! But do you really think so, *Mr. Pickwick*? Do you, though?

Mr. P. Certainly.

Mr. M. No. But you're joking, though.

Mr. P. I am not, indeed!

Mr. M. Why, then, to let you into a little secret, *I* think so too. I don't mind telling you, *Mr. Pickwick*, although I'm dreadfully jealous by nature — horrid — that the lady is in this house.

[*Takes off his spectacles, winks at MR. P., and puts them on again.*

Mr. P. No!

Mr. M. Yes, sir.

Mr. P. You've seen her, then?

Mr. M. No. Wouldn't do, you know, after having just come off a journey. Wait till to-morrow, sir; double the chance then. Mr. Pickwick, sir, there's a suit of clothes in that bag, and a hat in that box, which I expect, in the effect they will produce, will be invaluable to me, sir.

Mr. P. Indeed!

Mr. M. Yes. You must have observed my anxiety about them. I do not believe that such another suit of clothes, and such a hat, could be bought for money, Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. P. I congratulate you, sir, upon the possession of such irresistible garments.

[A pause, during which Mr. M. is lost in thought.]

Mr. M. She's a fine creature.

Mr. P. Is she?

Mr. M. Very, — very. She lives about twenty miles from here, Mr. Pickwick. I heard she would be here to-night, and all to-morrow forenoon, and came down to seize the opportunity. I think an inn is a good sort of place to propose to a single woman in, Mr. Pickwick. She is more likely to feel the loneliness of her situation in travelling, perhaps, than she would be at home. What do you think, Mr. Pickwick?

Mr. P. I think it very probable.

Mr. M. I beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick; but I am naturally rather curious; what may *you* have come down here for?

Mr. P. On a far less pleasant errand, sir. I have come down here, sir, to expose the treachery and false-

hood of an individual, upon whose truth and honor I placed implicit reliance.

Mr. M. Dear me, that's very unpleasant. It is a lady, I presume? Eh? Ah! Sly, Mr. Pickwick, sly! Well, Mr. Pickwick, sir, I wouldn't probe your feelings for the world. Painful subjects, these, sir, very painful. Don't mind me, Mr. Pickwick, if you wish to give vent to your feelings. I know what it is to be jilted, sir; I have endured that sort of thing three or four times.

Mr. P. (*Winding up his watch.*) I am much obliged to you for your condolence, on what you presume to be my melancholy case; but—

Mr. M. No, no, not a word more; it's a painful subject. I see—I see! What's the time, Mr. Pickwick?

Mr. P. Past twelve.

Mr. M. Dear me, it's time to go to bed. It will never do, sitting here. I shall be pale to-morrow, Mr. Pickwick. (*Rings; enter servant.*) Take this luggage to my bed-room. Good-night, Mr. Pickwick; good-night!

[*Takes candle and exit. Curtain.*]

SOME VALUABLE ADVICE.

SCENE: A room in an Inn. *Time, morning; table set for two; MR. MAGNUS, gorgeously arrayed, and much excited, paces the room.*

Enter MR. PICKWICK.

Mr. Magnus. Good-morning, sir. What do you think of this, sir?

Mr. Pickwick. (*Surveying him good-naturedly.*) Very effective, indeed.

Mr. M. Yes, I think it'll do. Mr. Pickwick, sir, I have sent up my card.

Mr. P. Have you?

Mr. M. (*Nervously.*) Yes; and the waiter brought back word that she would see me at eleven—at eleven, sir; it only wants a quarter now.

Mr. P. Very near the time.

Mr. M. Yes, it is rather near; rather too near to be pleasant—eh! Mr. Pickwick, sir.

Mr. P. Confidence is a great thing in these cases.

Mr. M. I believe it is, sir. I am very confident, sir. Really, Mr. Pickwick, I do not see why a man should feel any fear in such a case as this, sir. What is it, sir? There's nothing to be ashamed of; it's a matter of mutual accommodation, nothing more. Husband on one side, wife on the other. That's my view of the matter, Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. P. It is a very philosophical one. But breakfast is waiting, Mr. Magnus. Come! (*They sit.*)

Mr. M. (*Much agitated.*) He—he—he! It only wants two minutes, Mr. Pickwick. Am I pale, sir?

Mr. P. Not very. (*A pause.*)

Mr. M. I beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick! but have you ever done this sort of thing in your time?

Mr. P. You mean proposing?

Mr. M. Yes!

Mr. P. (*Energetically.*) Never, sir. Never!

Mr. M. You have no idea, then, how it's best to begin?

Mr. P. Why, I may have formed some ideas upon the subject, but as I never have submitted them to the test of experience, I should be sorry if you were induced to regulate your proceedings by them.

Mr. M. (*Looking again at his watch.*) I should feel very much obliged to you for any advice, sir.

Mr. P. (*With profound solemnity.*) Well, sir, I should commence, sir, with a tribute to the lady's beauty and excellent qualities; from them, sir, I should diverge to my own unworthiness.

Mr. M. Very good.

Mr. P. Unworthiness for *her* only, mind, sir; for, to show that I was not wholly unworthy, sir, I should take a brief review of my past life and present condition. I should argue, by analogy, that to anybody else, I must be a very desirable object. I should then expatiate on the warmth of my love, and the depth of my devotion. Perhaps I might then be tempted to seize her hand.

Mr. M. Yes, I see. That would be a very great point.

Mr. P. (*Warming with the subject.*) I should then, sir, come to the plain and simple question, "Will you have me?" I think I am justified in assuming that upon this she would turn away her head.

Mr. M. You think that may be taken for granted? Because, if she did not do that, at the right place, it would be embarrassing.

Mr. P. I think she would. Upon this, sir, I should squeeze her hand, and I think, — I *think*, Mr. Magnus — that, after I had done that, supposing there were no refusal, I should gently draw away the handkerchief, which my slight knowledge of human nature leads me to suppose the lady would be applying to her eyes at the moment, and steal a respectful kiss. I think I should kiss her, Mr. Magnus; and at this particular point, I am decidedly of the opinion that if the lady were going to take me at all, she would murmur into my ears a bashful acceptance. (*Mr. M. starts, gazes at Mr. P., shakes him warmly by the hand, and rushes off* C. D. *Mr. P. rises and paces the room. Door opens; enter MESSRS. TUPMAN, WINKLE, and SNODGRASS. They salute. Mr. P. greets them, and as they exchange salutations, MR. MAGNUS “comes tripping in.”*)

Mr. P. My friends, Mr. Magnus.

Mr. M. (*Excitedly.*) Your servant, gentlemen. Mr. Pickwick, allow me to speak to you one moment, sir. (*Draws him aside.*) Congratulate me, Mr. Pickwick; I followed your advice to the very letter.

Mr. P. And it was all correct — was it?

Mr. M. It was, sir — could not possibly have been better. Mr. Pickwick, she is mine!

Mr. P. I congratulate you with all my heart.

Mr. M. You must see her, sir; this way, if you please. Excuse us for one instant, gentlemen.

[*Exeunt Mr. P. and Mr. M.*

JEALOUSY.

SCENE; Private Parlor of the Inn. MISS WITHERFIELD seated, L. *A knock at door*, R.

Miss Witherfield. Come in!

Enter MR. MAGNUS and MR. PICKWICK.

Mr. M. Miss Witherfield, allow me to introduce my very particular friend, Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick, I beg to make you known to Miss Witherfield.

[*MISS W. rises; MR. P., R. C., bows, takes out his spectacles, puts them on, utters an exclamation of surprise, and retreats several paces; MISS W., L., with a half-suppressed scream, hides her face in her hands, and drops into her chair; MR. M. stands, c., motionless with horror and surprise; tableau.*

Mr. M. (*In a threatening tone.*) Mr. Pickwick, what is the meaning of this, sir? (*Louder.*) What is the meaning of it, sir?

Mr. P. (*Indignantly.*) Sir, I decline answering that question.

Mr. M. You decline it, sir?

Mr. P. I do, sir. I object to saying anything which may compromise that lady, or awaken unpleasant recollections in her breast, without her consent.

Mr. M. Miss Witherfield, do you know this person?

Miss W. (*Hesitating.*) Know him!

Mr. M. (Fiercely.) Yes, know him, ma'am? I said know him.

Miss W. I have seen him.

Mr. M. Where? Where?

Miss W. (Rising and averting her head.) That I would not reveal for worlds.

Mr. P. I understand you, ma'am, and respect your delicacy; it shall never be revealed by *me*, depend upon it.

Mr. M. Upon my word, ma'am, considering the situation in which I am placed with regard to yourself, you carry this matter off with tolerable coolness — tolerable coolness, ma'am.

Miss W. (Weeping.) Cruel Mr. Magnus!

Mr. P. Address your observations to me, sir. I alone am to blame, if anybody be.

Mr. M. O! you alone are to blame — are you, sir? I — I see through this, sir. You repent of your determination now — do you?

Mr. P. My determination!

Mr. M. Your determination, sir. O! don't stare at me, sir; I recollect your words last night, sir. You came down here, sir, to expose the treachery and falsehood of an individual on whose truth and honor you had placed implicit reliance, eh? (*Takes off his spectacles and rolls his eyes fiercely.*) Eh? But you shall answer it, sir.

Mr. P. Answer what?

Mr. M. (Striding up and down the room.) Never mind, sir! Never mind!

Mr. P. (Opening door, R., and calling off.) Tupperman, come here!

[*MR. T. enters with a look of surprise.*]

Mr. P. Tupman, a secret of some delicacy, in which that lady is concerned, is the cause of a difference which has just arisen between this gentleman and myself. When I assure him, in your presence, that it has no relation to himself, and is not in any way connected with his affairs, I need hardly beg you to take notice that if he continues to dispute it, he expresses a doubt of my veracity, which I shall consider extremely insulting.

[*MR. P.* “*looks Encyclopædias*” at *MR. M.*, who strides up and down the room, muttering, pulling his hair, &c.]

Mr. M. (*Stopping before MR. P., and shaking his fist in the latter’s face.*) You shall hear from me again, sir!

Mr. P. (*With lofty politeness.*) The sooner the better, sir!

[*MISS W.* rushes off in terror, L.; *MR. TUPMAN* drags *MR. P.* off, R.; *MR. M.* continues to rave, c.; *Curtain.*]

“A WICTIM O’ CONNUBIALITY.”

SCENE: A Room in a Public House. MR. WELLER seated at table, c., dining off a cold round of beef, a loaf of bread, and a pot of ale. SAM enters, R., with a travelling bag and a portmanteau.

Sam. How are you, my ancient?

Mr. Weller. (*Looking up in astonishment.*) Wy, Sammy! (*Rises slowly, and they shake hands.*) How are you? (*SAM nods in reply, and places luggage on the floor; MR. W. sits again, L. of table, and resumes his former occupation.*) That ’ere your governor’s luggage, Sammy?

Sam. You might ha’ made a worser guess than that, old feller. The governor hisself’ll be down here presently.

Mr. W. He’s a-cabbin’ it, I suppose?

Sam. Yes, he’s a-havin’ two mile o’ danger at eight-pence.

[*SAM sits R. of table and watches his father.*]

Mr. W. Wy, Sammy, I ha’n’t seen you for two year and better.

Sam. No more you have, old codger. How’s mother-in-law?

Mr. W. (*Laying down his knife and fork, and speaking solemnly.*) Wy, I’ll tell you what, Sammy, there never was a nicer woman as a widder than that ’ere second wenter o’ mine — a sweet creetur she was, Sammy; all I can say on her now, is, that as she was such an uncommon pleasant widder, it’s a great pity she ever changed her con-dition. She don’t act as a wife, Sammy.

Sam. Don't she, though?

Mr. W. (*Sighing and shaking his head.*) I've done it once too often, Sammy; I've done it once too often. Take example by your father, my boy, and be very careful o' widders all your life, 'specially if they've kept a public-house, Sammy. (*A pause, during which MR. W. takes a draught of ale, and SAM attacks the cold beef.*) She's queer, Sammy, queer; and she's been gettin' uncommon pious, lately, to be sure. She's too good a creetur' for me, Sammy, — I feel I don't deserve her.

Sam. Ah, that's wery self-denying o' you.

Mr. W. (*With a sigh.*) Wery. (*Another pause.*) Wy, what do you think them women does 'tother day, Sammy, — what do you think they does?

Sam. Don't know; what?

Mr. W. Goes and gets up a grand tea-drinkin' for a feller they calls their Shepherd. I was a-standing starin' in at the pictur'-shop, down at our place, when I sees a little bill about it: "Tickets, half-a-crown. All applications to be made to the committee. Secretary, Mrs. Weller." Well, what with your mother-in-law a-worrying me to go, and what with my looking for'ard to seein' some queer starts if I did, I put my name down for a ticket; at six o'clock on the Friday evenin,' I dresses myself out, wery smart, and off I goes vith the old 'ooman, and up we walks into a fust floor, where there was tea-things for thirty, and a whole lot o' women as begins whisperin' to one another, and lookin' at me, as if they'd never seen a rayther stout gen'l'm'n of eight and fifty afore. By and by, there comes a great bustle down stairs, and a lanky chap,

with a red nose and white neck-cloth, rushes up, and sings out, "Here's the Shepherd a-comin' to wisit his faithful flock;" and in comes a fat chap in black, with a great white face, a-smilin' away like clock-work. Such goin's on, Sammy! "The kiss of peace," says the Shepherd; and then he kissed the women all round, and ven he'd done, the man with the red nose begun. I was just a-thinkin' vether I hadn't better begin, too, — 'specially as there was a wery nice lady a-sittin' next me, — ven in comes the tea, and your mother-in-law, as had been makin' the kettle bile, down stairs. At it they went, tooth and nail. Such eatin' and drinkin'! I wish you could ha' seen the Shepherd walking into the ham and muffins. I never see such a chap to eat and drink — never. The red-nosed man warn't by no means the sort o' person you'd like to grub by contract; but he was nothin' to the Shepherd. Well; arter the tea was over, they sang a hymn, and then the Shepherd began to preach. And wery well he did it, considerin' how heavy them muffins must have lied on his chest. Presently he pulls up, all of a sudden, and hollers out, "Where is the sinner; where is the mis'erable sinner?" upon which, all the women looked at me, and began to groan as if they was dying. I thought it was rather sing'ler; but, howsever, I says nothing. Presently he pulls up again, and looking wery hard at me, says, "Where is the sinner; where is the mis'erable sinner?" and all the women groans again, ten times louder than afore. I got rather wild at this, so I takes a step or two for'ard, and says, "My friend," says I, "did you apply that 'ere obseruation to me?" 'Stead o' begging my

pardon, as any gen'l'm'n would ha' done, he got more abusive than ever; called me a wessel, Sammy — a wessel o' wrath — and all sorts of names. So my blood being reg'larly up, I first gave him two or three for himself, and then two or three more to hand over to the man with the red nose, and walked off. I wish you could ha' heard how the women screamed, Sammy, ven they picked up the Shepherd from under the table.

[*Winks at SAM, rises, goes to chimney, fills his pipe, lights it, returns, and throwing himself back in his chair, smokes vigorously; SAM, having finished his meal, takes up the ale jug, nods to his father, and taking a long pull at it, sets it down half empty.*

Mr. W. (*Looking into the pot.*) Wery good power o' suction, Sammy. You'd ha' made an uncommon fine oyster, Sammy, if you'd been born in that station o' life.

Sam. Yes, I des-say I should ha' managed to pick up a respectable livin'.

Mr. W. (*Shaking up the ale, by describing small circles with the pot.*) I'm wery sorry, Sammy, to hear as you let yourself be gammoned by that 'ere Trotter. I always thought, up to three days ago, that the names of Veller and gammon could never come into contract, Sammy — never.

Sam. Always exceptin' the case of a widder, of course.

Mr. W. (*Embarrassed.*) Widders, Sammy, — widders are 'ceptions to ev'ry rule. I *have* heerd how

many ord'nary women one widder's equal to, in p'int o' comin' over you. I think it's five-and-twenty; but I don't rightly know vether it ain't more.

Sam. Well; that's pretty well.

Mr. W. Besides, that's a verry different thing. You know what the counsel said, Sammy, as defended the gen'l'm'n as beat his wife with a poker, 'venever he got jolly. "And arter all, my lord," says he, "it's a am'able weakness." So I says respectin' widders, Sammy, and so you'll say, ven you gets as old as me.

Sam. I ought to ha' know'd better, I know.

Mr. W. (*Striking the table with his fist.*) Ought to ha' know'd better! Ought to ha' know'd better! Why, I know a young 'un as hasn't had half nor quarter your eddication — as hasn't slept about the markets, no, not six months — who'd ha' scorned to be let in, in such a vay; scorned it, Sammy.

[*Much excited, he rings the bell, and orders another pint of ale.*

Sam. Well, it's no use talking about it, now. It's over and can't be helped, and that's one consolation, as they always says in Turkey, ven they cuts the wrong man's head off. It's my innings now, gov'nor, and as soon as I catches hold o' this 'ere feller, I'll have a good 'un.

Mr. W. I hope you will, Sammy. I hope you will. Here's your health, Sammy, and may you speedily vipe off the disgrace as you've inflicted on the family name. (*Takes a long pull at the ale, and hands the mug to SAM, who quickly empties it.*) And now, Sammy (*looks at his watch*), it's time I was up at the office to get my vay-bill, and see the

coach loaded; for coaches, Sammy, is like guns — they requires to be loaded with wery great care, afore they go off. (SAM *smiles*; MR. W. *continues solemnly*.) I'm goin' to leave you, Samivel, my boy, and there's no tellin' ven I shall see you again. Your mother-in-law may ha' been too much for me, or a thousand things may have happened by the time you next hears any news o' the celebrated Mr. Veller o' the Bell Savage. The family name depends wery much upon you, Samivel and I hope you'll do wot's right by it. Upon all little pints o' breedin', I know I may trust you as vell as if it was my own self. So I've only this here one little bit of advice to give you. If ever you gets to up'ards o' fifty, and feels disposed to go a marryin' anybody — no matter who — just shut yourself up in your own room, if you've got one, and p'isen yourself off-hand. Hangin's vulgar, so don't you have nothin' to say to that. P'ison yourself, Samivel, my boy, p'ison yourself, and you'll be glad on it arterwards. (*Looks steadily at SAM, turns slowly, and opens the door, R., just as MR. PICKWICK is about to enter; MR. W. steps back to C. and touches his hat*) Good-mornin,' sir.

Mr. P. (*Entering.*) Good-morning.

[SAM rises, and going to MR. P., relieves him of his coat, hat, and cane.]

Mr. W. Fine mornin', sir!

Mr. P. Beautiful, indeed!

Sam. (*Nudging his father.*) Be quiet, old feller, it's the governor.

Mr. W. No! is it, though? (*Takes off his hat and advances to MR. P.*) Beg your pardon, sir, I hope you've no fault to find vith Sammy, sir.

Mr. P. None whatever.

Mr. W. Wery glad to hear it, sir. I took a good deal o' pains with his eddication, sir; let him run in the streets when he was wery young, and shift for hisself. It's the only way to make a boy sharp, sir.

Mr. W. (*Smiling.*) Rather a dangerous process, I should imagine.

Sam. And not a wery sure one, neither. Remember how I got done the other day.

[*MR. P. takes a chair near the table.*

Mr. W. I remember. And, now I think of it (*coming down to MR. P.*), warn't one o' them chaps slim and tall, with long black hair, and the gift o' the gab wery gallopin'?

Mr. P. (*Hesitatingly.*) Y-es.

Mr. W. 'Tother's a black-haired chap, in mulberry livery, with a wery large head?

Mr. P. and Sam. (*Eagerly.*) Yes, yes, he is.

Mr. W. Then I know where they are, and that's all about it; they're at Ipswich, safe enough.

Mr. P. No!

Mr. W. Fact, and I'll tell you how I know it. I work an Ipswich coach now and then for a friend o' mine, and the last time I worked down, I took 'em up at the Black Boy, at Chelmsford, right through to Ipswich, where the man-servant — him in the mulberries — told me they was a-goin' to put up for a long time.

Mr. P. I'll follow him. We may as well see Ipswich as any other place. I'll follow him.

Sam. You're quite certain it was them, governor?

Mr. W. Quite, Sammy, quite, for their appearance is wery sing'ler; besides that 'ere, I wondered to

see the gen'l'm'n so formiliar with his servant; and more than that, as they sat in front, right behind the box, I heerd 'em laughing, and saying how they'd done old Fireworks.

Mr. P. Old who?

Mr. W. Old Fireworks, sir; by which, I've no doubt, they meant you, sir.

Mr. P. (*Striking the table with his fist.*) I'll follow him.

Mr. W. I shall work down to Ipswich the day arter to-morrow, sir, and if you really mean to go, you'd better go with me. [*Goes towards door.*]

Mr. P. So we had; very true. We will go with you. But don't hurry away, Mr. Weller; won't you take anything? [*Rings bell.*]

Mr. W. (*Stopping.*) You're wery good, sir; perhaps a small glass of brandy to drink your health, and success to Sammy, sir, wouldn't be amiss.

Mr. P. Certainly not. (*To waiter, who enters.*) A glass of brandy here!

[*The brandy is brought; MR. W. pulls his hair to MR. P., nods to SAM, and tosses it off.*]

Sam. Well done, father; take care, old feller, or you'll have a touch of your old complaint, the gout.

Mr. W. (*Setting down the glass.*) I've found a sov'r'i'n cure for that, Sammy.

Mr. P. (*Hastily taking out his note-book.*) A sovereign cure for the gout! What is it?

Mr. W. The gout, sir;—the gout is a complaint as arises from too much ease and comfort. If ever you're attacked with the gout, sir, jist you marry a

widder as has got a good loud voice, with a decent notion of usin' it, and you'll never have the gout agin. It's a capital prescription, sir. I takes it reg'lar, and I can warrant it to drive away any illness as is caused by too much jollity.

[*Gives a labored wink, sighs deeply, and slowly retires.*

Mr. P. (*Smiling.*) Well, what do you think of what your father says, Sam?

Sam. Think, sir! Why, I think he's the wictim o' connubiality, as Blue Beard's domestic chaplain said, with a tear of pity, ven he buried him.

[*Curtain.*

NOTE. — This Scene may be used before No. 1, on the list given on page 299; or, if that would make the play too long, it may be substituted for No. 1 or No. 2.

INDEX TO CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.



ALFRED. See HEATHFIELD.

ALLEN, MISS ARABELLA. See MRS. NATHANIEL WINKLE.

AUNT MARTHA. See JEDDLER.

BARDELL, MRS. MARTHA. } See Vol. I.*
BARDELL, TOMMY. }

BELLE. Engaged to Scrooge in his youth. "A fair young girl, in a mourning-dress."

BENTON, MISS. Master Humphrey's housekeeper, "very smartly dressed."

BERTHA. See PLUMMER.

BOFFIN, NICODEMUS. "A broad, round-shouldered, one-sided old fellow, in mourning; dressed in a pea overcoat, and carrying a large stick." Thick shoes, thick leather gaiters, thick gloves "like a hedger's," and broad brimmed hat. At "The Bower," page 207, he is "easily attired, in an undress of short, white smock-frock."

BOFFIN, HENRIETTA. Wife of Nicodemus. "A stout lady, of a rubicund and cheerful aspect. A smiling creature, broad of figure, and simple of nature." Costume at The Bower: "a low evening dress, of sable satin, and a large, black velvet hat and feathers."

BOXER. A Newfoundland dog, belonging to John Peerybingle.

* "Dialogues from Dickens."

BRITAIN, BENJAMIN. Servant to Dr. Jeddler. Scene I. page 105. "A small man with a sour, discontented face." Scene II. page 134 (three years later), "much broader, much redder, much more cheerful, and much jollier, in all respects." Scene III. page 148 (six years later), "a proper figure for a landlord, short, round, and broad."

BRITAIN, MRS. See **NEWCOME.**

CHRISTMAS PAST, GHOST OF. "A strange figure—like a child. Its hair, which hangs about its neck and down its back, is white as if with age; yet its face has not a wrinkle on it, and the tenderest bloom is on the skin. The arms are very long and muscular. Its legs and feet delicately formed, and, like the arms, bare. It wears a tunic of purest white; around its waist is bound a lustrous belt. It holds a branch of fresh green holly in its hand, and its dress is trimmed with summer flowers. The strangest thing about it is, that from the crown of its head there springs a clear jet of light, by which all this is visible; this occasions its using a great extinguisher for a cap, which it holds under its arm."

CHRISTMAS PRESENT, GHOST OF. As Scrooge sleeps in his chair, his room has undergone a transformation. "The walls and ceiling are hung with living green, from every part of which glisten bright gleaming berries. Such a mighty blaze roars up the chimney, as that hearth has never known in Scrooge's time. Heaped on the floor (L.), to form a sort of throne, are turkeys, geese, pies, puddings, apples, pears, oranges, immense Twelfth cakes, and seething bowls of punch. In easy state upon this couch, there sits a jolly Giant. He bears a glowing torch, shaped like Plenty's horn, and holds it up as Scrooge wakes. He is clothed in one simple deep-green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. The garment hangs loose, so that the breast of the figure is bare. Its feet are also bare, and on its head

is a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark-brown curls are long and free. Girded round its middle is an antique scabbard; but no sword is in it, and the scabbard is eaten up with rust."

CHRISTMAS YET-TO-COME, GHOST OF. "A solemn Phantom, tall and stately; shrouded in a deep black garment, which conceals its head, face, and form, leaving nothing visible, save one outstretched hand."

CLEMENCY. See NEWCOME.

CLUPPINS, MRS. ELIZABETH. A friend of Mrs. Bardell. "A little, brisk, busy-looking woman." She wears a cap.

COPPERFIELD, MR. DAVID. See Vol. I.

CRAGGS, MR. THOMAS. Attorney. "A cold, hard, dry man, dressed in gray and white, like a flint."

CRAGGS, MRS. Wife to Thomas. Dress not described.

CRATCHIT, BOB. Clerk to Ebenezer Scrooge. "Thread-bare clothes, darned up and brushed; at least three feet of white comforter, exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him." His small, dark room, leading from Scrooge's office, is so cold that he wears his comforter constantly, and often tries to warm his hands at the candle.

CRATCHIT, MRS. Bob's wife. Scene I. page 27. "Dressed out, but poorly, in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap, and make a goodly show for sixpence." Scene II. page 37, the same, without the ribbons.

CRATCHIT, MARTHA. Bob's eldest daughter. "A poor apprentice at a milliner's."

CRATCHIT, PETER. Bob's eldest son. No article of his dress described, except in Scene I. page 27. "A monstrous shirt collar, Bob's private property, conferred upon his son, in honor of the day."

CRATCHIT, BELINDA. Bob's second daughter.

CRATCHIT, TIM. See TINY TIM.

CRICKET, FAIRY. Not described.

- DILBER, MRS. A laundress.
- DODSON. Of Dodson & Fogg, attorneys for Mrs. Bardell.
"A plump, portly, stern-looking man, with a loud voice."
- DOT. See PEERYBINGLE.
- EDWARD. See PLUMMER.
- FAIRY. See CRICKET.
- FIELDING, MRS. "A little, querulous chip of an old lady, with a peevish face, having waist like a bed-post."
- FIELDING, MAY. A friend of Dot.
- FOGG. Of Dodson & Fogg, attorneys. "An elderly, pimply-faced, vegetable-diet sort of man, in black coat, dark mixture trousers, and small black gaiters."
- FRED. Scrooge's nephew. Not described.
- GHOST. See CHRISTMAS.
- GHOST. See MARLEY.
- GRUFF AND TACKLETON. Dealers in toys, &c. See TACKLETON.
- HEATHFIELD, ALFRED. Ward of Dr. Jeddler; engaged to Marion Jeddler; afterwards married to her sister, Grace. In both of the scenes in which he appears, he is dressed for travelling.
- HUMPHREY, MASTER. An old gentleman.
- ISAAC. A constable; friend of Mr. Jackson. "A shabby man, in black leggins, carrying a thick ash stick."
- JACKSON, MR. Clerk to Dodson & Fogg. Brown coat and brass buttons; soiled drab trousers, tightly strapped over Blucher boots; very dirty shirt collar, and a rusty black stock. Sandy hair, carefully parted on one side, flattened down with pomatum, and twisted into little semicircular tails around his face.
- JEDDLER. Dr. Anthony. A philosopher. "He has a streaked face, like a winter pippin, with here and there a dimple

to express the peckings of the birds, and a very little bit of pig-tail behind that stands for the stalk."

JEDDLER. "Aunt Martha;" maiden sister of Dr. Jeddler.

JEDDLER, GRACE. Daughter of Dr. Jeddler; married to Alfred Heathfield.

JEDDLER, MARION. Younger daughter of Dr. Jeddler.

JOE. "The Fat Boy." Mr. Wardle's servant. Fat, and red-faced; seldom awake, except when eating.

JOE, OLD. A pawnbroker. "A gray-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age."

MAGNUS, PETER. "A red-haired man, with an inquisitive nose and blue spectacles; an important-looking, sharp-nosed, mysterious-spoken person, with a bird-like habit of giving his head a jerk every time he said anything." Dress not described.

MARLEY, GHOST OF. Long coat and waistcoat; tights; boots with tassels; a long chain clasped about his middle and dragging behind him; a folded handkerchief bound under his chin; his hair tied in a bristling pig-tail.

MARTHA, AUNT. See JEDDLER.

MARY. Mrs. Winkle's maid.

MICAWBER, WILKINS. "A stoutish, middle-aged person, in a brown surtout and black tights and shoes, with no more hair on his head (which was a large one, and very shining), than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face. His clothes are shabby, and he has an imposing shirt collar on. He carries a jaunty sort of a stick with a large pair of rusty tassels to it, and a quizzing-glass hangs outside his coat." A genteel air and a condescending roll in his voice.

MICAWBER, EMMA. Wife of Wilkins. "A thin, faded lady, not at all young; rather slatternly in her appearance." The only articles of dress mentioned, are a cap and brown gloves, and a scarf thrown over her shoulders.

NEWCOME, CLEMENCY. Scene. About thirty years old; face

plump and cheerful. Dress, a printed gown, of many colors, and hideous pattern, and with short sleeves; a white apron; a little cap perched awkwardly on her head, blue stockings, very large and clumsy shoes. "She always had, by some accident, grazed elbows, in which she took such a lively interest, that she was continually trying to turn them round, and get impossible views of them." Scene (six years later), landlady of "The Nutmeg Grater." "A plump, matronly woman, with a certain bright, good-nature in her face, and contented awkwardness in her manner."

NICKLEBY, MRS. See Vol. I.

NICKLEBY, KATE. See Vol. I.

NUTMEG GRATER, THE. An inn kept by Ben. Britain and Clemency Newcome, after their marriage.

PEERYBINGLE, JOHN. "A poor carrier: lumbering, slow, honest John; this John, so heavy, but so light of spirit; so rough upon the surface, but so gentle at the core; so dull without, so quick within; so stolid, but so good!" In Scene I. (page 49), he has on a rough great coat, a large comforter around his throat, and a heavy cap. His dress for the house would be likely to be a "homespun" suit.

PEERYBINGLE, MRS. MARY. Otherwise called "Dot." "Fair, and young, and plump."

PEERYBINGLE, MASTER. "The baby; two months and three days old;" costume at "The Picnic," "a cream-colored mantle for its body, and a sort of nankeen raised-pie, for its head."

PERKER, MR. Attorney. "A little, high-dried man, with a dark, squeezed-up face, and small, restless black eyes; dressed all in black, with very shiny boots, and a clean shirt with a frill to it; a gold watch-chain and seals depend from his fob. He carries his black kid gloves in his hands, not *on* them." When he speaks, he has a way of "thrusting his wrists beneath his coat-tails, with the air of a man in the habit of pro-

pounding regular posers." He is also much addicted to taking snuff from an oblong silver box.

PICKWICK, MR. SAMUEL. See Vol. I.

PLUMMER, BERTHA. The blind daughter of Caleb Plummer.

PLUMMER, CALEB. A poor toy-maker. "A little, meagre, thoughtful, dingy-faced man, who seemed to have made for himself a great coat from the sack cloth of some old box; for when he turned, he disclosed upon the back of that garment the inscription G. & T., in large black capitals. Also the word GLASS, in bold characters. He has a wandering, thoughtful eye, a description which would equally apply to his voice."

PLUMMER, EDWARD. Son of Caleb. Scene I. page 49. and Scene IV. page 76, he is disguised as a very deaf old man, with long white hair. "His garb is quaint and odd — a long way behind the time; its hue is brown all over. In his hand he carries a great brown club, or walking-stick, which, being struck upon the floor, falls asunder and becomes a chair." In Scene VII. page 95, he is a "young, sunburnt sailor-fellow, with dark, streaming hair;" having just returned from church, where he has been united to Mary Fielding, his dress must be appropriate to the occasion, and at the same time adapted to his station in life.

RADDLE, MR. AND MRS. See Vol. I.

ROGERS, MRS. One of Mrs. Bardell's lodgers.

SAM. See WELLER.

SANDERS, MRS. A friend of Mrs. Bardell. "A big, fat, heavy-faced personage."

SCROOGE, EBENEZER. A miser; afterwards converted. Office and street dress, not described. In his room he has on a dressing-gown and slippers, and a night-cap; no cravat.

SCROOGE'S ROOM. "Sitting-room, bed-room, lumber-room. Table; sofa; small fire in grate; spoon and basin ready on table; little saucepan of gruel on the

hob; dressing-gown hanging against the wall; old fire-guard, old shoes, two fish-baskets, wash-stand on three legs, and a poker."

SLITHERS, MR. A hair-dresser.

SLOWBOY, MISS TILLY. A foundling, and servant to Dot. "Of a spare and straight shape; her garments appear to be in constant danger of sliding off those sharp pegs, her shoulders, on which they hang loosely. Her costume is remarkable for the partial developments of some flannel vestment of a singular structure; also for affording glimpses, in the region of the back, of a corset, in color, a dead green. She has a rare and surprising talent for getting the baby into difficulties, as she constantly brings its head into contact with doors, dressers, bed-posts, &c.

SNITCHEY, MR. JONATHAN. Of Snitchey & Craggs, attorneys. "He was like a magpie, or a raven, only not so sleek."

SNITCHEY, MRS. Wife of Jonathan. Dress not described, except that she wore a turban, in which was a bird of paradise feather.

STIGGINS. See Vol. I.

TILLY. See SLOWBOY.

TINY TIM. Youngest son of Bob Cratchit; a cripple, carrying a little crutch.

TRADDLES, TOMMY. See Vol. I.

WARDEN, MICHAEL. A client of Snitchey & Craggs. He first appears as a man of about thirty years of age, negligently dressed; afterwards (six years older), complexion browned by the sun; wearing a mustache; dressed in mourning; "cloaked, booted, and spurred."

WARDLE, MR. A friend of Mr. Pickwick. "A stout gentleman, in a blue coat and bright buttons, corduroy breeches, and top-boots."

WEGG, SILAS. "A literary man, *with* a wooden leg. A

knotty man, and a close-grained, with a face carved out of very hard material." Dress not described.

WELLER, MRS. TONY. }
 WELLER, MR. TONY. } See Vol. I.
 WELLER, MR. SAMUEL. }

WELLER, TONY, 2D. Grandson to Tony Weller. "A very small boy, four years and eight months old, firmly set on a couple of very sturdy legs; he has a very round face, strongly resembling his grandfather's, and a stout little body of exactly his build."

WINKLE, NATHANIEL. A member of the Pickwick Club. A new, green shooting-coat, plaid neckerchief, and closely fitting drabs.

WINKLE, MRS. NATHANIEL (*née* Arabella Allen). Appears in "a lilac silk, a smart bonnet, and a rich lace veil; looking prettier than ever."

WITHERFIELD, MISS. A middle-aged lady. In the "Romantic Adventure," Vol. I. page 91, she wears a dressing-sack; her hair is done up in yellow curl-papers; and, having brushed her "back hair," she puts on her head a muslin night-cap, with a small, plaited border.







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